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Bus man gives Branson trains a shunt

Keith Harper and Roger Cowe on a boardroom coup that got the City talking

TWO of Britain's least conventional entrepreneurs, Richard Branson and Brian Souter, yesterday teamed up in a move allowing Mr Branson to scrap plans for a £250 million stock market flotation of Virgin Rail this summer.

In a surprise announcement, set against a background of mounting speculation in the City that Mr Branson was increasingly reluctant to float his much criticised rail empire, Stagecoach said that it was taking a 49 per cent share in Mr Branson's rail business.

Stagecoach, the country's fastest growing transport group, headed by Mr Souter, is paying £138 million in cash and shares for its holding, and is also paying off £20 million of debt.

Stagecoach's investment valued Virgin Rail at around £280 million, some £30 million more than was likely under a flotation.

The holding is being sold by four venture capital backers of Virgin Rail, and Stagecoach is paying for the stake with £50 million of new equity and £100 million of new cash. The four venture capitalists — Bankers' Trust, Texas Pacific, JP Morgan and Electra — will see their original £45 million investment more than triple in value in two years.

Under the deal, Virgin will increase its holding from 41 to 51 per cent, guaranteeing that it has a majority control of the company.

Virgin's two rail franchises, West Coast and Cross-Country, will continue to be run by Virgin management under the Virgin brand. But Stagecoach's chief executive, Mike Kinski, will join the Virgin Rail board.

Mr Branson insisted that the flotation would have been fine. He was going to press the button yesterday, and was heading for a satisfactory price in spite of gloomy talk in the City.

"We have sold the shares at a price which was more than had been mooted and we have been given 10 per cent of the shares for nothing, as well as paying off debts."

Mr Branson said the deal had been struck because of



Brian Souter and (below) his sister Ann Gloag, whose Stagecoach company is taking a 49 per cent stake in Virgin Rail



His dress code is casual, but not his business style

Keith Harper and Roger Cowe

AS A child, Brian Souter used to play with toy buses on the lounge floor of his family's council house in Perth.

Now he is a multimillionaire, casually attired in a lemon jacket and red Kickers, at the head of Britain's fastest-growing international transport operation, which boasts buses, trains and now airports across the world.

His sister, Ann Gloag, with whom he runs Stagecoach, has been confirmed as Britain's second richest woman after the Queen.

It is all a far cry from the humble beginnings of Stagecoach, set up in 1960 on the £12,000 redundancy money of their bus driver father. Two second-hand coaches ferried passengers between Dundee and London, with the first round trip costing £15.

Stagecoach has also diversified into the rail industry, despite getting its fingers burnt a few years ago with a loss-making experiment with sleeper trains.

Much of their success is attributed to the speed with which they took advantage of the privatisation and deregulation by the Conservatives, allowing them to make huge profits from former assets they had bought at knock-down prices.

The City was agog yesterday over whether Mr Souter and Richard Branson would make easy partners in the Virgin Rail enterprise. "They should get on extremely well, declared one analyst. "But the west coast main line is a huge challenge."

Mr Branson will be happy

Planes, trains and buses

Bus operations

- Operates local bus services through subsidiaries spread across Scotland and England as well as international operations in Sweden, Africa and New Zealand

Passenger rail

- Awarded a 7-year franchise to run South West Trains (London to Exeter and South Coast) and a 5-year franchise to run Island Line (Isle of Wight).

Rolling stock leasing

- Owms Porterbrook Leasing Company

Airports

- Bought Freebirk Airport in Scotland and is showing interest in RAF Northolt

Employees

Year	Employees
1995	17,837
1996	21,889
1997	31,418

to get him on board as the Government's subsidy for the line begins to fall away. By 2004, Mr Branson should be paying back the Treasury around £100 million a year from the route's profits.

In their company's relatively short life, both Ann Gloag and Brian Souter have learned to get used to controversy. Littered along their rags-to-riches story are claims that they have only got where they are by putting their competitors out of business. With a turnover which has mounted from £500 million to £1.3 billion in three years, they were always bound to cause tension.

Stagecoach has been the subject of more than 20 competition investigations. The most notable was when the Monopolies and Mergers Commission described the company's practices in putting Darlington Transport Company out of business as "predatory, deplorable and against the public interest."

Now Mr Souter is the toast of the labour movement. He has just finished serenading the Scottish Trades Union Congress, with a rendition of the Red Flag in his own words. He is proud of his roots and can sympathise with the unions. Mr Branson and Mr Souter may need Tony Blair — but the Prime Minister also needs them.

Neill's new conflict of interest dilemma

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

LORD NEILL, the lawyer appointed by Tony Blair to clean up corruption in public life, was facing a fresh conflict of interest yesterday — only days after he accepted a lucrative brief to represent Dame Shirley Porter in her fight to overturn a £27 million surcharge in the "homes for votes" scandal.

He has been asked, in his role as chairman of the Committee of Standards in Public

Life, whether more than £500,000 of legal fees should be paid to two Westminster councillors cleared of "wilful misconduct."

Lord Neill faces being summoned to appear before MPs to explain why he took on Dame Shirley's brief while remaining head of the public standards watchdog.

Alan Lazarus, Westminster council's Labour opposition leader, has asked for a ruling from Lord Neill on whether the authority should pay the lawyers' bills for Conservative councillor Alex Segal and

the former Tory leader, Miles Young. Both were criticised by John Magill, the district auditor, for their role in the affair but were acquitted of "wilful misconduct."

No one was available at Lord Neill's office in Whitehall for comment last night. Last Friday, he was condemned by Labour MPs for agreeing to take the brief from Dame Shirley whom three judges last year branded as a "liar" when she challenged Mr Magill's findings. He found her guilty of "wilful misconduct and dis-

graceful gerrymandering" over plans to selectively sell off council homes in marginal wards.

Peter Bradley, Labour MP for The Wrekin and former deputy leader of the Labour group on Westminster council, is today to press his colleagues on the Commons Public Administration Committee to summon Lord Neill to explain his position.

Mr Bradley said: "His position seems to be heavily compromised by taking on Dame Shirley's case. He could either continue to be a barrister

taking on high profile cases or he could decide to hold his present position as chairman of a committee on public standards. In my view, he can't do both."

Lord Neill has defended his decision on the basis of the "cab rank" rule — under which barristers are expected to take the next case in line. But critics argue that taking up Dame Shirley's case is in direct conflict with the committee's role. The committee is at present in the middle of an inquiry into party funding.

MPs back reducing gay age of consent to 16

continued from page 1

Disorder Bill, Tony Blair went out of his way to signal his support in the division lobbies by turning up to vote, as he frequently does not.

As the debate got under way in a crowded House, militant gay activists such as Peter Tatchell complained that there was still a long way to go before true equality was achieved. But mainstream Blairite MPs insisted that it was a "landmark change" that proved the Government's commitment.

Sir Patrick Cormack, one of the Commons' leading churchmen, echoed fears of the main churches in saying

that he did not believe "every homosexual is born that way" or that genes were the primary determinant. "After all, would anybody seriously suggest that every sailor who followed this way was born a homosexual? No."

Last night, however, the issue was not primarily Ms Keen's amendment. It was, rather, the further amendment proposed by Labour backbencher Joe Ashton to prevent those in positions of authority — ranging from teachers to carers in residential homes — from having sexual relations with those in their charge aged under 18.

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Think Wood

In BBC TV interview, au pair convicted of causing baby's death questions the role of the parents, saying: 'If they didn't do it, who did?'

Twenty-year-old Louise Woodward in Manchester yesterday with Panorama reporter Martin Bashir, whom she told that she felt 'fortunate' to have only spent 279 days in jail in America.



Woodward claims she is 'scapegoat'

Rosaleen Nicoll

LOUISE Woodward, the 20-year-old au pair convicted of killing baby Matthew Eappen in America last year, last night said she was "fortunate" to have only spent 279 days in jail.

But in a television interview on the BBC's Panorama programme, she said that was only if one took her conviction into account. "Two hundred and seventy-nine days is a long time for an innocent person," she told journalist Martin Bashir, who is famous for his 1995 Diana interview.

Ms Woodward continued to protest her innocence, arguing she was the victim of the public's need for a scapegoat. "The mentality is that somebody has to pay," she said. "And that somebody has to be me."

Wearing a dark suit and sitting with her legs crossed in a pose similar to that adopted by Diana, she questioned the role of Matthew's parents, Sunil and Deborah, saying: "If the parents didn't do it, who did?"

During the interview, Ms Woodward talked about her life with the Eappen family and how much she loved the children. She also thanked her supporters in Britain and

gave her reaction to last week's decision of the Massachusetts supreme judicial court to allow her to go home.

Mr Bashir asked her why she had no message for the Eappen family when questioned at a press conference at Manchester airport on the day she returned.

As the BBC's editor tried to get the programme ready for broadcast, the policeman who arrested Ms Woodward after the death accused her of "absolute child abuse".

In an e-mail to BBC News Online, Det Sgt William Byrne said he felt he had to make his feelings known. "Why is it so hard for many people to realise that this is absolute child abuse?" he wrote. "It happens every day here in America and in England. If [Louise Woodward] was a high unattractive woman with no teeth and tattoos, would the public have had a different opinion as to whether or not she was guilty?"

He ended by telling the BBC: "You may as well now know that I am Detective Sergeant William Byrne of the Newton Police Department that interviewed, investigated and arrested Louise Woodward. I testified for hours on October 14th during the trial. His identity was later confirmed."

Ms Woodward's supporters said they hoped the programme will be another step in the fight to clear her name.

"Louise just wants to tell her story," said Sandra McCabe, one of the founding members of the campaign group set up in Ms Woodward's home village of Elton in Cheshire following her arrest.

"I think if she can do that, and with the scientific evidence to back her up, she will be able to prove her innocence and start to get on with her life. People should just listen to her."

The former au pair and her mother, Sue, refused to comment as they stroled through Elton, calling on wallflowers and campaigners.

Andrew Miller, Ms Woodward's MP, said he was not among the millions who watched the programme, broadcast at 10pm last night, because of his commitments in Parliament. However, he would watch a tape as soon as he could.

"This is the beginning of the process by which Louise can tell her story," he said. "I hope as a result of this we can start getting the scientific community to look carefully at the arguments she sets out, and that Barry Sheek has set out, to help us in the campaign to prove her innocence."

Child takes Britain to European court over stepfather's caning

Law 'failed to protect boy against injuries inflicted by parent'

Claire Dyer
Legal Correspondent

BRITISH law failed to protect a boy with behavioural difficulties, asthma and special needs from significant injuries by his stepfather between the ages of five and eight, the European Court of Human Rights has today ruled.

The boy, aged 14, is bringing the first case to go to Strasbourg on the rights of parents to use corporal punishment in the home.

His counsel, Allan Levy QC, told nine Strasbourg judges that it was a landmark case, raising "the most fundamental human rights issues: those of human dignity, physical integrity and equality before the law". He called for chil-

dren to be given the same rights as adults to protection from assault.

The outcome of the case, expected in the autumn, will not stop parents administering mild smacks, but is likely to force the Government to change the law to stop caning and other harsher forms of physical punishment.

The boy, named only as A, was repeatedly beaten by his stepfather between 1990 and 1993 with a 3ft stick.

This caused "extensive bruising and linear scarring, and resulted in intense pain and humiliation", said Mr Levy.

"The opinion of a consultant paediatrician was that there was 'definite evidence of physical child abuse'."

In terms of British law parents may use "reasonable chastisement" in disciplining

their children.

The stepfather admitted caning the boy and was charged with assault causing actual bodily harm, but his lawyers argued that the punishment was reasonable chastisement and a jury found him not guilty.

In 1994 the European Commission of Human Rights, which filters cases for the court, unanimously found that the caning amounted to "inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment", contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Government accepted the commission's findings. The Health Minister, Paul Boateng, said the punishment was "cruel, inexcusable and has no place in civilised society" and offered £10,000 compensation to settle the case.

The Government also agreed to change the criminal law, but only to the extent of

safeguarding against inhuman and degrading treatment. Mr Levy said the Government's proposal to leave it to juries to decide, applying the case, raised 'fundamental human rights issues: those of human dignity, physical integrity and equality before the law'.

In families where both parents were interviewed, 36 per cent of children had been subjected to "severe" punishment by parents.

States should not feel obliged to subject parents who used mild physical rebukes to a criminal prosecution any more than they feel obliged to prosecute adults for trivial assaults on other adults, he added. But children should not be subject to harsher punishment at home than schools were allowed to administer.

"In fact deterrence by way of clarity and consistency in the law is more important in relation to the more private domain of the family home than it is in the relatively public context of a school," he said.

He pointed out that large-scale research had found "an extraordinarily high prevalence of punishment which we are confident that the court would find to be in breach of the convention".

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contemporary social standards, was inadequate.

In a string of cases like A's the jury had found the beatings to be reasonable chastisement. "These findings represent contemporary social standards in the UK," he said.

Nation's greats say farewell to the Fleet Street legend, Sir David

Tony Blair and media barons remember Sir David English

Luke Harding

SIR David English would doubtless have been well pleased. Sitting in the front row at his funeral service yesterday was Tony Blair, the Prime Minister. Next to him was Rupert Murdoch, the world's most powerful media magnate. Only one person was missing from what should have been a fearsome triumvirate, Lady Thatcher, to whom Sir David had once given such unstinting support. She had flown off on a US lecture tour instead.

A constellation of Fleet Street luminaries past and present turned out yesterday to pay tribute to Sir David, one of the century's most gifted and influential editors, who died of a stroke two weeks ago, aged 67.

Oddly, the Conservative Party was virtually absent from the pews.

During his 21 years as editor of the Daily Mail, Sir David was an unwavering supporter of the Conservatives. He virtually embodied Middle England, defining its aspirational pulse. He was at the helm of the Mail, when it reinvented itself as a tabloid in 1971, tapping into a new market of women readers.

Later, though, as chair-



Sir David English: dynamic and inspirational editor



Sir David English: his Daily Mail came to symbolising the values of Middle England

man and editor-in-chief of Associated Newspapers, he and his proprietor, Lord Rothermere, grew increasingly dissatisfied with the Tories' drift under John Major. It was, perhaps, hardly surprising then that among the great and the good who packed St Bride's Church in Fleet Street, London, there was only one representative of the Thatcher ancien régime, Kenneth, oow Lord, Baker.

It was left to New Labour to provide his epitaph. "He was a good friend. He was a great man," Tony Blair said. "But I think the most important thing about him was that he was a true man, and someone who meant a lot to me."

Rupert Murdoch added: "He was one of the few editors who left a great legacy in his successors."

Sir David's widow, Irene,

was too ill to attend yesterday's service. Instead it was left to Lord Rothermere, owner of the Evening Standard, Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday, to give the address. Others had described Sir David as a "great journalist, inspired leader, and editor without compare". Lord Rothermere said. He wanted to recall "David the man", whom he described as "a loyal friend", a "faithful husband" and "a discerning father" — "a man for all seasons of the soul".

Lord Rothermere recounted how Sir David had been offered a peerage by Margaret Thatcher but had refused, asking that it be deferred until his retirement. Last year Mr Blair agreed to accept a renewed recommendation. Sir David died three days before his peerage was to be announced in this month's honours list.

After a series of stirring hymns, including Jerusalem, Sir David's coffin was carried out by his son, Neil, and other pall-bearers.

The Prime Minister and Mr Murdoch followed, together with the editor's daughters, Amanda and Nikki, and their families. As the funeral party spilled out into lunchtime sunshine, Mr Blair and Mr Murdoch carefully avoided being photographed together.

Sir David's body will be buried in Switzerland today near Villars, close to where he and his family have a chalet, and to where he would escape when pressures of work allowed.

Players' union chided over men only event

Lucy Ward
Political Correspondent

THE Professional Footballers' Association was criticised yesterday for twice turning away Britain's only female footballer from an awards ceremony because she was a woman.

But the Government warned of difficulties in any move to legislate to tackle the case of Rachel Anderson, aged 40, who was present in the seats reserved for special guests in the House to bear Liberal Democrat Lord Razzall's case.

The association insists its awards dinner has been a men-only occasion since its inception 25 years ago and would remain so.

A solicitor, presented a petition to peers calling for the Sex Discrimination Act to be changed to make the ban illegal.

He questioned why the PFA should discriminate "on the grounds of sex against a guest who happens to be a woman and happens to be the only woman registered as a Fife agent".

He called on the Government to provide legislative protection for her.

A registered trade union had responsibilities that went further than that of simply a

private club, which could discriminate on sexual grounds, he stressed.

Government whip Lord Whitty said ministers' views on the issue were clear. The Minister for Sport, Tony Banks, had refused to attend the event because of the PFA attitude, he told peers. But he cautioned that dealing with discrimination involving private occasions and events was "a very complex matter".

Mrs Anderson, a Fife-licensed agent, was refused entry to the Professional Footballers' Association annual award dinner in April, when PFA executive Gordon Taylor insisted it was "men only".

Her case was read out to the Lords under a rarely-used procedure known as a Prayer to Parliament. Mrs Anderson is seeking an amendment of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to extend protection under the law to visitors to events organised by trade unions and other professional organisations.

Mrs Anderson was invited to the dinner by West Ham player Julian Dicks, one of her 27 clients. Mr Taylor blocked her invitation, claiming that the event was men only because if wives and girlfriends were included it could mean the exclusion of some of his members.

The refusal prompted Mr Banks to return his invitation on the grounds that the men only rule was contrary to government policy, and has since backed Mrs Anderson's campaign. Others who boycotted the event or condemned Mr Taylor's action included Graham Kelly, chairman of the Football Association, Mark Turnbull, president of the National Union of Journalists, and John Monks, general secretary of the TUC.

Mrs Anderson who has been working in football for seven years, said yesterday she believed the Government would consider amending the law.

She agreed that certain events should be kept as men only, such as stag nights but proposed that events taking place in the public domain should be open to everyone, regardless of their sex, colour or ability.

Mrs Anderson, said her experience had not turned her against men. "I like men. They are just misguided at times."

Rank and file police reply to 'disgrace' of Lawrence case

David Pollister

JACK STRAW, the Home Secretary, has been urged by a senior official of the Police Federation to reject the report of the "stage-managed" public inquiry into the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

In a letter to the magazine Police Review, Mike Bennett, chairman of the Metropolitan branch, says that the damage done to race relations "could be irreparable, and I have no hesitation in making the accusation that is exactly what the militants and agitators wanted at the outset".

He describes the inquiry as "the greatest test in our history", and says: "I seriously doubt whether the Met deserves to be painted as the disgrace we read about day in day out..."

He also wonders whether the media is correct in saying we appear to accept incompetence rather than be branded as racist.

While recognising that mistakes were made, Mr Bennett says: "We set out to ensure none of our actions was racist and to obtain the more-than-water-tight evidence that is so necessary in today's criminal justice system, and as a result we have allowed the simple things to appear as incompetence — at least in hindsight."

Fast-track plan to cut legal bills

Claire Dyer
Legal Correspondent

THE Government yesterday unveiled details of its plans to encourage lawyers to settle out of court.

Advocates, whether barristers or solicitors, would be paid fees for trial and preparation for claims between £3,000 and £10,000, and £750 for claims between £10,000 and £15,000.

One option that lawyers are urging on Lord Irvine is limiting fixed costs initially to the trial. In the meantime, a more fundamental examination of why costs can exceed the size of the claim would be undertaken.

A feasibility study on the fast-track scheme commissioned by the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies was also published yesterday.

It concludes that the reforms will require a huge "culture shift" on the part of lawyers. Solicitors' behaviour, creating a barrier to cheap and speedy resolution of legal disputes, is often motivated by fear of making the wrong move.

"Ligation is known to be a risky business and lawyers are often terrified that things will go wrong, leaving their clients blaming them and perhaps suing them. The generalists (non-specialist lawyers) referred nervously to 'dusting off their negligence policies'."

amount for the trial, which would not exceed a day. Incentives would be built into the costs scheme to encourage lawyers to settle out of court.

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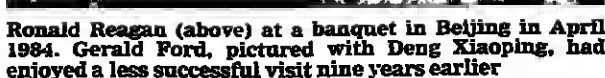
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Martin Kettle In Washington

BILL CLINTON boards Air Force One in Washington tomorrow for a flight to China, starting a nine-day state visit that has become riddled with more than usual, with domestic diplomats.

When he lands at Xian, the home of the terracotta army, on Thursday, he will become the fifth United States president to visit China, following in the footsteps of Richard Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

Since Nixon broke the ice in 1972, the visits have been more ceremony than substance. Mr. Clinton will want to do better. He will have with him the hugging agenda of environmental and bilateral issues appropriate to a meeting between the world's two most important countries.

Top of the list is the administration's wish to use alliance with China to force in nuclear non-proliferation agreement following their

recent visits. The visit will also focus on the continuing Asian economic crisis and the issues of trade and human rights, which dominated last year's visit to the US by China's president, Jiang Zemin. The visit will also be dominating the American media's interest in the trip — and so influencing the domestic perception of it.

The first is how Mr Clinton will welcome the official, high-ranking ceremony when he reaches the capital, Beijing, on Saturday to begin the substantive political parts of his visit. He is the first US president in Beijing since the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, and the formal welcome will be at the site of the crushing of the democracy demonstrations.

The delicate choreography of the Tiananmen Square visit will be, at best, a halfway Mr Clinton will handle the human rights question have dominated the run-up to his departure. The White House has tried hard both to stress Mr Clinton's participation in the ceremony and to find an additional location for such ceremonies, and to dis-



miss the suggestion that by going to Tiananmen he is turning a blind eye to the events of the past.

But Mr Clinton and his advisers, ever watchful of the domestic impact of his foreign trips, have said his team will speak out publicly on human rights during the visit and raise the issue in talks with President Jiang.

The US national security adviser, Sandy Berger, said last week that Mr Clinton would "address human rights more than once", and yesterday the White House did not rule out the possibility that the president would make some form of private visit to the scene of the massacre later in the trip, and possibly

lay a wreath. The White House has ruled out a meeting with dissidents, however. The second big hurdle Clinton has to overcome is the domestic perception, eagerly promoted by his Republican opponents, that the visit is tainted by allegations of financial links between the White House and Beijing. The accusations are that funds from the Chinese government found their way into the president's 1996 election campaign coffers, and that, partly in return, the Clinton administration exported a secret satellite and a top technology to the Chinese, possibly endangering U.S. security interests.

A fundraiser for the Democratic Party, Johnny Chung

has told federal investigators that he channelled nearly \$200,000 from a Chinese military officer into party accounts.

Mr Clinton's critics have been further encouraged by the revelation that the White House gave the Loral space technology company — whose chairman, Bernard Schwartz, is a big Democratic Party donor — a satellite export licence for China when Loral was being investigated for unauthorised transfers of missile technology to Beijing.

Mr Clinton has been taking a combative line to the allegations. "There are some people who criticise everything I do," he told Chinese journalists this week. "If I

walked out of the White House and spread my arms and I never could fly, so people would claim that I had done something wrong."

The visit has become the most important test of the increasingly divergent approach to foreign affairs of Mr. Clinton and the rightwing Republican leadership in Congress.

Mr. Clinton supports the policy of "constructive engagement" with Beijing he inherited from the Bush administration. In an article in *Newsweek*, Mr. Clinton says: "We are a better off working with China than without it."

But the Republicans prefer economic sanctions to put pressure on China to acquiesce to US policy.

dislike, Zhai approved the dishes (shark's fin followed by sea bream, chicken) and the choice of music (America the Beautiful) but did not stay for the food. Among the guests were a cobbler and an engine driver, chosen to represent the Chinese people.

Beijing was unhappy about the US quest for détente with China's arch-enemy, the Soviet Union. Deng Xiaoping warned the Americans against "the illusion of peace."

Mr Ford left without even a final communique. Two months later Beijing rubbed salt in the wound by flying an aircraft to California to bring back Nixon for a personal visit.

But Mr Bush said, even if he had been there, he would not have attended the television interview. He said it was the biggest audience of his life.

"A new breeze is blowing in China", he said diplomatically without mentioning the problem of human rights.

But Mr Bush sought to appease critics back home by inviting the dissident Fang Lizhi to a barbecue party at the Sheraton Hotel. Mr Fang's taxi was stopped by the police; he tried to catch a bus, but the police stopped that too.

There was no word and was a sign of much worse to come. Within four months, army tanks were crushing the Tiananmen protest.

himself, they were sent packing in full measure. Economic relations broken down completely in a parting message from British ambassador Lord Pearce, joined with German, Greek and other colleagues in a spite toast "no anarchy". Pearce said they saw their departure had worsened relations, but she added: "is a risk we are at".

He said last night he was considering leaving his ambassadorial post and asking for the \$4 million it had

Jeremy Lennard in Bogotá

ANDRES Pastrana has been elected Colombia's president for four years after tearfully admitting defeat to the current leader, Ernesto Samper.

Mr Pastrana, who alleged that Mr Samper had won with the help of a million dollars from the drug cartel, this time attracted support from across the political spectrum for his Conservative party campaign run under the banner of the 'Gran Alianza for Change'.

Mr Pastrana, 56, defeated the candidate of the ruling Liberal Party, Horacio Ruling, who took 36.5 per cent.

Thousands of banner-waving supporters packed the main square in Bogotá's centre in Bogotá as Mr Pastrana, who took up office on August 7, promised political reforms, economic regeneration and an end to Colombia's 34-year civil war.

"Today's result is a victory for all Colombians," he said. "Tomorrow begins the fight for reconstruction, for reconciliation, and for peace."

Outside crowds packed the streets and one of the first results of Mr Pastrana's election was an all too familiar sight in Bogotá — a huge traffic jam.

Mr Pastrana's victory ends 12 years of unbroken Liberal party rule in Colombia. It also represents a cry for change from a Colombian public which, under a weak and discredited president, has endured continuing internal conflict and increased economic hardship.

Mr Samper served as interior minister and Mr Samper's

loyal companion throughout his scandal-ridden term. This weakened Mr Serpa's support as liberal rebels, business leaders and the authors lined up behind Alfaro.

But for many of the Colombians calling for change, Sunday's result represents something of a compromise. "I voted for change in the first round on May 31 and we were left with the traditional left or right," said Carmen Restrepo, a voter. "I voted for Pastrana, but only for lack of any other option."

In the first ballot, the independent challenger Noemí Sanjin, who stood as the only candidate for change, lost to the two traditional parties, polled nearly 30 per cent of the vote.

She won in the major cities, and both second-round candidates agreed that she had about 2.5 million supporters who would effectively decide Sunday's contest.

Ms Sanjin did not say which way she would vote, but, in the absence of her guidance, her voters' traditional supporters put their faith in her followers and he has pledged to honour the spirit of the independent vote.

Ms Sanjin, who still carries considerable political weight, insisted that actions, not words, would win her co-operation.

"Both campaigns were characterised by negative accusations, generalised promises and lack of clarity. We will work for the good of all Colombians," she said.

The turnout, in a country where voters traditionally stay at home on election day, was unusually high.

The promise of radical reform and an end to decades of political power sharing between the major parties lured out 60 per cent of the electorate, placing great hope and trust in Mr Pastoran's shoulders.

The new president, whose policies will be debated by a congress dominated by Liberals, faces opportunities for broad radical social investment and tax cuts to stimulate the country's ailing economy.

In his victory speech he appealed to Colombians to drop their prejudices for the good of the country, and warned of turbulent times ahead.

Aside from having to deal with entrenched economic and powerful armed factions, the president faces other serious problems.

The civil war has left Colombia with an internal refugee population of more than 1 million.

Health and education services are crumbling, and the country's international image as a drug producer with a poor record on human rights needs repair.

Lack of confidence in Colombian leaders is at least partly to blame for the plummeting peso, stubbornly high interest rates and soaring rising unemployment which have plagued the traditionally strong Colombian economy.

The new president inherited a legacy in a messy said Andres Riveros, a political analyst.

"He has some major obstacles to overcome. But he also has the hopes of a broad spectrum of society pinned on him. With that kind of backing he has the opportunity to make a difference in the country which picked Colombia up off its knees."

**Suzanne Goldenberg
in New Delhi**

INDIA gave thanks for an old friend yesterday after Russia defused international outrage at New Delhi's nuclear test explosions and agreed to supply it with two reactors.

The deal, which was sealed on Sunday, came only 10 days after Russia and the other G8 leading industrialised nations agreed at their summit in Birmingham not to export technology that could be used in the weapons programmes of India and Pakistan.

It makes Russia the first foreign supplier of nuclear technology to India for more than 20 years. The United States and Canada, which

built India's earliest nuclear reactors in the 1960s, ended co-operation after New Delhi's first test explosion in 1974.

India is delighted at this move because it is a signal of what the Indian government would like to portray, and that is, 'we are not alone to the world any more,' one diplomat said.

New Delhi-based diplomats from a dozen other G8 nations say they are uncertain whether the deal, valued at about \$2 billion in 1985, was a technical breach of sanctions.

So far, there has been relatively muted international reaction to the visit to India by the Russian prime minister, atomic energy minister, and foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, and President Boris Yeltsin's deputy, Alexander Rutskoy.

But the diplomats argued that the supply

of the two reactors to a power station at Kudankulam, in southern Tamil Nadu state, was contrary to the spirit of the 1988 summit resolutions condemning last month's nuclear tests by India and China, and by India and Pakistan.

"The timing raises all kinds of questions, given all the attention on nuclear issues," another diplomat said. However, Russia, which has also supplied reactors to Iran, has declined to sell its technology abroad.

Indian officials were unduly delighted yesterday. They insisted that the deal was not covered by sanctions because it was originally agreed in 1988, and because the power was for civilian use. The International Atomic Energy Association safeguards the

officials also believed it was not covered by more stringent "full scope" safeguards agreed in 1992.

Y. Ashok, a spokesman for India's Atomic Energy Commission, said, "This deal predates negotiations on any other commitment that Russia might have chosen to make afterwards. It just so happens that the finalisation took a great deal of time because the Soviet Union collapsed, and an entirely new finance package had to be worked out."

But the United States yesterday condemned Russia's decision to supply India. "This is not good news," said the state department spokesman, James Rubin. "It's the wrong message at the wrong time. We are going to urge the Russians to get out of this."

"Even before India's latest test we urged Russia not to proceed with the sale as it is not consistent with Russia's obligations as a member of the nuclear suppliers' group not to sell reactors to countries without full safety safeguards."

The sale has been an international effort "to get India to understand that nuclear testing does not bring rewards" he added.

The deal also signals a resumption of co-operation between New Delhi and Moscow, India's main arms supplier, before the Soviet Union collapsed.

Last week a high-ranking Indian military delegation was in Russia looking at a range of defence equipment including fighter planes and

...and views the po-
...pressure and ultima-
...dictated at Belarus as
...capable." It said.
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AP In Sand

ASTRANDED midge-sub Amarinc, suspected of belonging to North Korea, was lowered to a South Korean naval port yesterday after it became entangled in a fishing net. It was not clear if there was anybody aboard.

The vessel became entangled in a sea area where a North Korean submarine sank in ground in 1996 an left 37 people dead and sent relations between the Koreans plunging to their lowest level in years.

"We're pretty sure it belongs to North Korea," a spokesman for the joint U.S.-South Korean military staff said. "We described the vessel as a 'midge submersible'."

"Indications are that it's not an accidental border crossing," said an official of Seoul's unification ministry, which handles relations with North Korea. Officials said the incident occurred 11 miles east of Sokcho, a coastal town just south of the North Korean border.

Kim In-yong, skipper of the fishing boat, told police by radio that his net was caught on the submarine's propeller, and that he saw three or four people on the submarine's deck trying to escape it.

Sokcho is about 5 miles from where a North Korean submarine ran aground in September 1986, toothlog off a 53-day manhunt that ended with 24 North Korean infiltrators and 13 South Koreans dead.

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help my community," says Doudou, "I came out from the city walls at the sun-
set, hills stretching
to the Syrian border. "I
may leave for as long
as I like," he says.

In a Syrian Orthodox
church who has recently
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lage, a young man, 25
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A row over politicians' links with terrorism may block Nato enlargement, writes Philip Willan in Rome

Moro's ghost haunts Italy

A FULL-BLOWN political drama threatens to develop today as the ghosts of Italy's turbulent past turn a routine vote on Nato enlargement into a test of confidence in the government.

The decision to admit the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to Nato is supported by the vast majority of MPs, but the government's survival has been thrown into doubt by a row over the shortcomings of long-vanished Christian Democrat administrations.

Criticism of their failure to tackle organised crime or secure the release of Aldo Moro, a former prime minister and chairman of the Christian Democrat Party who was kidnapped and killed by the Red Brigades 20 years ago, has poisoned the political atmosphere and threatened to block ratification of the Nato enlargement.

A key player in the skirmishing has been Francesco Cossiga, a former Italian president, whose Democratic Union for the Republic is staunchly pro-Nato while being outside the governing centre-left coalition.

Mr Cossiga had promised to support the prime minister, Romano Prodi, on Nato expansion, thereby filling the gap in the government's majority left by Communist Refoundation, which normally backs Mr Prodi but is not keen on Nato and had announced it would be voting No. But that was before Mr Cossiga had travelled to Palermo to give evidence at the Mafia trial of his former political colleague, Giulio Andreotti, who is charged with alleged complicity with Cosa Nostra.

Relations between the two men have not always been cordial, so many were surprised when Mr Cossiga launched into a passionate defence of Mr

Andreotti. He told the court the former prime minister had been fanatically opposed to the Mafia, and had been prepared to stretch the law to the limit to crack down on organised crime.

This endorsement of Mr Andreotti's conduct elicited an immediate reply from Pietro Folena, the justice spokesman for the Left Democrats, the largest party in Mr Prodi's coalition. In a letter to a newspaper, he criticised Mr Cossiga's "justificationist theory" that Mr Andreotti had been too preoccupied with terrorism to deal effectively with the Mafia.

The state had also inadequately responded to the challenge of political terrorism, Mr Folena said. "Cossiga has said that the state was caught off guard at the time of the Moro kidnapping, but the documents that might have proved that lack of readiness have disappeared," he wrote.



Aldo Moro: Kidnapped and killed by Red Brigades

Mr Cossiga, who was interior minister at the time of the kidnapping, is extremely sensitive to criticism of his performance during the 55 days that Moro was held prisoner by the Red Brigades. His irritation was therefore exacerbated when President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro gave public support to the view that those who ordered Moro's kidnapping still remained unsanctified despite five successive trials.

Mr Scalfaro said he believed the captured terrorists were the colonels and not the real strategists of the Red Brigades' assault on the state.

Mr Cossiga responded to what he described as a two-pronged attack by the president and the Left Democrats by announcing that his party would not, after all, be voting in favour of an enlarged Nato. He said the president's words raised grave doubts about the integrity of the government at the time of the Moro affair, the reliability of the structures of the state and the participation of Western powers and the United States in the horrendous crime.

Franco Cossiga, the chairman of the parliamentary commission which

is investigating the mysteries of Italy's terrorist past, Mr Scalfaro's comments on the Moro affair were merely common sense. In an interview published yesterday by the Milan daily Corriere della Sera, he said the grandees of the former Christian Democrat Party were as likely to stab one another in the back as to gush with effusive expressions of solidarity.

"You don't have to be a conspiracy-monger to believe that the strength of the Red Brigades derived from something larger than the Red Brigades themselves," Mr Pellegrino said.

A last-minute compromise may yet save the parliament from the embarrassment of voting against a motion that most of its members support, but the rancour over the last few days is evidence that Italy is still conditioned by the unresolved mysteries of its recent history.

News in brief

Ugandan schoolgirls snatched by rebels

REBELS of the Lord's Resistance Army raided a school in northern Uganda at the weekend and abducted 39 girls, the military said. They added that two of the girls, from St Charles Lwanga secondary school in Kitgum district, had since escaped.

Fifty other people were kidnapped at the weekend in a series of raids in the north by the LRA rebels, who are based in southern Sudan and whose main method of recruitment is abduction. According to Unicef, the LRA have taken at least 10,000 young people to the past three years.

There had been a recent lull in abductions, but the military said the rebels had reverted to their old tactics to replenish their numbers. — Anna Borzello, Kampala.

Billionaire's aide extradited

A SENIOR aide to Osama Bin Laden, the Saudi billionaire and financier of Islamic extremists worldwide, has been extradited to Egypt to stand trial, police in Cairo said yesterday.

Saeed Sayed Salama, an Egyptian national, was returned from an unidentified Arab country several days ago and has been charged with planning to overthrow the Egyptian government, the officials said. He is also charged with joining an illegal organisation. If convicted, he could be executed.

The officials said Mr Salama had confessed to working closely with Mr Bin Laden in Afghanistan and was given the task of supervising some of his economic projects. Mr Salama was a member of the Egyptian extremist group Islamic Jihad which assassinated President Anwar Sadat in 1981. — AP, Cairo.

PM sets cabinet deadline

THE Romanian prime minister, Radu Vasile, yesterday gave the 26 members of his cabinet three days to say whether they had collaborated in the past with the country's Communist secret police, the Securitate. Mr Vasile expected an answer on his return from a visit to Poland on Thursday, his aide Gabriel Piscociu said.

The health minister, Francisc Barany, admitted last week that he was a Securitate agent, saying he was forced to co-operate and did no one any harm. Mr Vasile has demanded his resignation.

The centre-right government, which replaced a cabinet of former communists in late 1996, has been stumped to find Securitate collaborators in its ranks, particularly in parties such as the National Peasants' Party, many of whose senior men were killed by its agents. — AP, Bucharest.

Riga reforms citizen law

LATVIA'S controversial citizenship law, which has prompted threats of trade sanctions from Russia after it left about a third of the population stateless, was amended by the Latvian parliament yesterday. The amendment means all children born in the country since independence in 1991 will be granted automatic citizenship, regardless of whether their parents are citizens.

At independence Riga granted citizenship only to those who had lived there before Latvia was forcibly annexed in 1940 and to their descendants. That left some 700,000 people stateless, most of them ethnic Russians moved there under Joseph Stalin's Russification drive, and their descendants. — AP, Riga.

Banana denies charges

ZIMBABWE'S former president Canaan Banana told the high court in Harare yesterday that charges of sodomy were "absolute nonsense" after his lawyer failed to have the case dismissed. The 62-year-old cleric said he had no idea why former aides, a gardener and an unemployed man he allegedly picked off the streets had made the allegations.

Mr Banana replied "Never", "No" and "Absolute nonsense" when asked whether he sodomised or tried to sexually attack members of his staff, or offered any of them dinner and drinks or danced or slept with them. The high court ruled that Mr Banana must defend himself against the charges after deciding that there was enough evidence "for any reasonable court to convict him". — Reuters, Harare.

Traffic in women growing

THE United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, told a conference in Budapest yesterday that trafficking in women was a growing global problem.

UN figures show that up to 4 million people are smuggled into foreign countries each year, generating as much as \$4.4 billion for criminal syndicates. — Reuters, Budapest.

Bears face increased cull

SWEDEN said yesterday it had increased its bear cull this year because domestic animals had been attacked and beehives damaged. Hunters will be allowed to shoot 78 of the country's 1,000 bears, up nine from last year. — Reuters, Stockholm.

Envoys leave as Belarus leader plumbs depths

Tom Whitehouse in Moscow

THE disputes between Belarus and the West worsened yesterday when the ambassadors from Britain, Germany, the United States, Japan, France, Greece and Italy returned home in protest against the former Soviet republic's closure of their residences.

Their Belarusian counterparts in the West are expected to be sent packing in a tit-for-tat measure.

But diplomatic relations have not broken down completely: in a parting gesture, the British ambassador, Jessica Pearce, joined her French, German, Greek and Italian colleagues in a champagne toast "to an early return".

Ms Pearce said they hoped their departure would not worsen relations further, but she added: "This is a risk we are taking."

Poland said last night that it was considering withdrawing its ambassador and asking for the return of money it had invested in his residence.

The authorities in the Belarusian capital, Minsk, were unimpressed by the move. "The foreign ministry considers there were no grounds to turn this action into a political incident, and views the political pressure and ultimata directed at Belarus as unacceptable," it said.

If President Alexander Lukashenko re-opens their residences, the ambassadors are expected to return. Their recall follows a three-month dispute with him regarding a luxury com-



The German ambassador, Horst Winkelmann, arrives at Minsk airport yesterday for his flight home

PHOTOGRAPH: SERGE GENTS

pound on the outskirts of Minsk, which is home to most of the diplomatic community. The president has his private residence there and does not want his view spoiled by foreign flags.

He told the diplomats to leave, claiming that emergency plumbing repairs needed to be done. When they complained of a severe breach of diplomatic protocol, the president appeared to relent before losing patience and blocking all entrances to the compound last Friday.

Ms Pearce said: "The point of us leaving is to show him that he cannot treat us in the way that he expects to be able to treat anyone in his country."

"Ambassadors are expected to be treated with a certain status, a certain respect and a certain common courtesy."

The German ambassador, Horst Winkelmann, said: "I hope we will not be going for long, but everything that has happened is incomprehensible and sad."

Since he was elected

three years ago, Mr Lukashenko, a former collective farm director, has persecuted the nationalist opposition and shown blatant disregard for civil rights. He has ignored strong criticism from European Union governments and the US on a number of incidents, including the shooting down of a hot air balloon carrying two Americans, the extension of his term of office by referendum, and public praise for Hitler.

Opposition figures do not expect the ambassadors' withdrawal to produce a change. Vitaly Tsiganov of the newspaper Svaboda said locking out the ambassadors "goes down well with his supporters. Only Russia has any real influence."

The country has little external debt with the West, and can ignore its criticisms. But it relies on Russian gas and oil.

"The Kremlin will be rubbing its hands," said Mr Tsiganov. "If the Western ambassadors are closed down, Belarus will effectively lose its independence."

Oldest monastery prays for a miracle

A Syriac Christian community is fighting for survival, caught in the war in south-east Turkey, writes Chris Morris in Midyat

"I came back here to help my community," Isa Dingu says, staring out from the monastery walls at the sun-baked stony hills stretching away to the Syrian border. "I intend to stay here for as long as I can make it."

Isa is a Syriac Orthodox Christian who has recently returned to the isolated village of south-eastern Turkey after six years studying in England. But he is swimming against the tide. Tens of thousands of people from this an-

cient community have given up and migrated abroad. It is early Sunday morning and Isa has just taken part in mass at Mor Gabriel, the oldest functioning monastery in the world. Last year it celebrated its 1,600th anniversary in the region Syriac Christians call Tur Abdin.

The pews in the small church are all but empty. The faithful have departed but the monks are determined to maintain their age-old traditions. They speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ. "The monastery still plays

a great role for Christians in Tur Abdin, and for those in the diaspora," Saliba Ozmen, one of the monks, says. "We pray that one day our Christian brothers and sisters who have left will come back."

Their prayers are unlikely to be answered. Caught in the conflict between Kurdish rebels and Turkish security forces, most Syriac Christians have left their villages for good. Pressure is mounting on those who remain.

Tur Abdin is a bleak region. Economic necessity has played a role in the migration, but there is something else at work. Both Kurds and Turks have clashed with the Syrians in recent years, and a rise in Islamic fundamentalism has made matters worse.

The monks are reluctant to speak publicly about the problems, but local people say the Turkish authorities distrust the community. The district governor wants the monks to stop educating children at Mor Gabriel and he has forbidden them to repair their buildings.

"They want us all to leave," says a man in the nearby

town of Midyat, tucking into a huge bowl of lava, a local stew. "Seventy members of my extended family are now in Sweden, but it would be too cold for me." His friends laugh, but they too are wary about the future. Midyat used to be famous for its Syriac silversmiths, and their intricate silverware jewellery. Only half a dozen are left now.

"Anyone who wants to go is

leaving," says Sami Alptekin, one of the last silversmiths. "As long as there's a community here there's always going to be a culture. But when the community disappears, the culture dies." Across the road from his home, the neighbouring house stands shuttered and empty, its yellow walls glowing in the sun.

"The people have gone; only the stones remain," he says.

Only two main monasteries are left in the region, and Syriac Christianity may soon be no more than a memory in its ancient heartland.

Syriacs across the world, from the large community in southern India to the new outposts in western Europe, support their brethren in southern Turkey. Time, though, is taking its toll and a long decline has accelerated in recent years.

The plight of Turkey's Syriac Christians has also attracted the attention of groups in Britain and elsewhere who campaign for religious freedom. Representatives of foreign embassies regularly visit Mor Gabriel. Visitors are made welcome, but the community knows it will have to find strength from within if it is to survive.

The future is in the hands of young men like Isa Dingu. His village was forcibly evacuated during the war and most of his family are now in Switzerland. Isa was offered a job as a priest in London, where a Syriac mass is celebrated every fortnight at the Coptic church in Kensington.

"I loved England, but I love it here more," he says. "That's why I came home. I know it will be difficult, but I felt I had to try."

The area governor wants the monks to stop educating children and has forbidden them to repair buildings

In the time it takes to read this article, 29 women somewhere in the world will be ripped apart giving birth.
Maggie O'Kane in Niger

G2 page 8

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Comment

Diary

Simon Bowers

DESPITE the iron discipline with which this government enforces its will, there will always be moments of constructive and frank debate within the Labour Party worthy of admiration. Stephen Pound, MP for Ealing North, recently expressed a different opinion with colleague Barry Gardiner by attempting to set him on fire with a cigarette lighter as he addressed the House. The issue which drove Stephen to such lengths, you will be surprised to learn, was not Europe. Nor was it a straightforward Old versus New Labour scrap. In fact, what got Stephen's goat was that Barry had managed to get a coveted invitation to the Parliamentary Beer Club dinner, but at the last minute decided he would rather spend the evening in the debating chamber. Steve is unapologetic when we call. "Well, it's been a long time since an MP was set on fire," he points out. "I had to stop myself because Tommy Mackay (a whip) was there. I know it doesn't feature in Erskine May as appropriate behaviour," he chuckles, "but it could catch on, couldn't it?"

AS part of our pledge to raise the media profile of Stobhain McDonagh MP, after she complained that some of her colleagues feel "green with envy" over press attention given to Diary hero Andrew Mackinlay, the free-thinking MP for Thurrock, we bring you, as promised, another dose of Miss McDonagh. After describing rumours — later confirmed to be true — of a conversation concerning Rupert Murdoch between Tony Blair and Italian PM Romano Prodi, as "C-R-A-P", you will recall, Alastair Campbell looked to be in some trouble back in April. Rallied to his defence, however, loyal Stobhain and four colleagues wrote a curt note in this newspaper. "There are many reasons why we were elected on May 1st," it said, "Alastair Campbell is one of them." Today Alastair is to face questions from a Commons select committee on the malign influence of spin-doctoring. We called Stobhain in search of another message to the spinners. She was unavailable.

WE are intrigued by a new book entitled *The Ki* by the world's leading kiliologist, Takashi Yoshida. Ki, literally translated, means "ether". Kiliology means "feng shui astrology". But the important thing to remember is that Boy George, Barry Manilow and Yoko Ono swear it is going to be the next big thing. Any lingering scepticism is dispelled by two acknowledgements on the inside cover: one of Viscount Rothermere, "for his efforts on my behalf," and a special thanks to Sir David English, for his assistance and friendship. (Many have praised Sir David since his death earlier this month, but few mention the contribution the Daily Mail has made to serious journalism through its relentless championing of the paranormal sciences.) Tomorrow we consult The Ki to calculate Peter Mandelson's chances of achieving a cabinet post.

ANOTHER entry in this month's *Pc Brains* competition steps forward. So grateful, reports Police magazine, was PC Matt Foster of Plaistow station to a local clergyman for the use of his home as an observation point, that he took the vicar's son, a West Ham supporter, to Upton Park. "Here comes Geoff Hurst, he played for West Ham and England," Matt informed the lad. "Mr Hurst, would you please sign this boy's autograph book?" The star just frowned. "Please, Mr Hurst," said the lad. "Of course I'll sign it," he replied, "but can I write 'Martin Peters'?"

Helmetts off for PC Foster... a crowd trouble spotter at West Ham matches.

ACHARMING letter has arrived from Centurion Press Ltd. It is "just a note to say how delighted we were to hear that our chairman David Evans has been awarded a Life Peerage." How nice, "I thought you might be interested" it goes on, "in the attached biography and photograph." We are indeed. Thank you very much.



Ministers prepare to blame an Asian meltdown for their future failures

Hugo Young



MIDSUMMER 1998 was when the honeymoon ended. It had been a deceptively long one. For nearly 14 months, there didn't seem to be anything the Government was doing wrong. Tony Blair was exempt from normal rules of assessment, and the nation was happy to let him be. But with the election, the earth moved and the shadows lengthened. We learned that this was a government like any other. It faced social problems it could not solve and economic equations it could not square. It was finally losing the most precious asset it had: the luxury of being given the benefit of the doubt.

Such benefit could not, of course, endure for ever. The exemption from judgment was a bit of illusion. In a spiral of contradiction between the needs of the domestic and the exporting economies, ensures that every interest-rate decision will be the wrong one: with the worst of all, another rise, now widely predicted.

With this, inevitably, come doubts about the promises. Yes, these were always prudently framed. Class sizes and hospital waiting-lists were to be counted only at the end of the first term. But if we're talking stagflation, a glimmering of doubt arises, just as it does about the treasured welfare-to-work programme though which youth unemployment would be decimated.

Even now, one hears ministers getting ready to blame an Asian meltdown, the thing we're told Mr Blair fears most, as the reason for possible, entirely unforeseeable, failure.

Glad summer is also on the wane politically. Scotland has become a nasty surprise. The devolution statute evokes no gratitude, only a variety of re-

sentments against the rottenness rather than the prescient wisdom of Scottish Labour, and the new betrayals not the old fidelities of British Labour. Donald Dewar has his oose against the wall. Nationwide, coarse reality imposes itself through the discovery that party membership, far from proceeding ecstatically upwards, is proving the allegiances of 1996-97 to have been a somewhat frivolous matter.

None of this is catastrophic. Government is for ever an imperfect business, quite unaltered to the triumph of Gordon Brown's first budget. With extraordinary speed, once the process has begun, suspension of disbelief begins to be withheld. Even in the absence of an alternative, the magic departs. From now on, the Government will be pressed sternly forward by force of its majority, rather than surfing, as has been its luxury hitherto, the waves of untroubled public approval.

This is a situation which Mr Blair is fully capable of handling. He's an astute, wide-angled politician, who has been awaiting the moment when the tide of support would turn against him. But other aspects of pre-Blair normality, I think, will also show themselves. Doubt will blossom, argument intensify. More critics will show their heads, fastening on the common perception that ministers are blundering, as is their fate, out of their depth. Frustrated Labour backbenchers will edge into the limelight. Media spinning will be conducted from a less arrogant, more defensive position, while doubtless becoming even more aggressive in its methods. But it will be less so. We know we have a government that is nothing special, and normal discourse, mercifully, will be resumed.

What we learn, however, is that this is irrelevant to the end of honeymoons. Entirely on its own, a government can make a mess of things. Irrespective of its power in Parliament, it faces, dilemmas, to which there are no answers that enable it to go on pleasing most of the people all of the time. The myth of infallibility is torn apart by events, and already some lugubrious post-mortems are beginning on Gordon Brown's first budget.

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What you see with Louise is what you get. A decade ago

ceptance by the people shows no sign of being paralleled by a corresponding rise in the Opposition's credibility.

What we learn, however, is that this is irrelevant to the end of honeymoons. Entirely on its own, a government can make a mess of things. Irrespective of its power in Parliament, it faces, dilemmas, to which there are no answers that enable it to go on pleasing most of the people all of the time. The myth of infallibility is torn apart by events, and already some lugubrious post-mortems are beginning on Gordon Brown's first budget.

With extraordinary speed, once the process has begun, suspension of disbelief begins to be withheld. Even in the absence of an alternative, the magic departs. From now on, the Government will be pressed sternly forward by force of its majority, rather than surfing, as has been its luxury hitherto, the waves of untroubled public approval.

This is a situation which Mr Blair is fully capable of handling. He's an astute, wide-angled politician, who has been awaiting the moment when the tide of support would turn against him. But other aspects of pre-Blair normality, I think, will also show themselves. Doubt will blossom, argument intensify. More critics will show their heads, fastening on the common perception that ministers are blundering, as is their fate, out of their depth. Frustrated Labour backbenchers will edge into the limelight. Media spinning will be conducted from a less arrogant, more defensive position, while doubtless becoming even more aggressive in its methods. But it will be less so. We know we have a government that is nothing special, and normal discourse, mercifully, will be resumed.

Celebrity nobodies

Ekow Eshun



THE most popular film now showing on American cinema screens is *The Truman Show*, starring Jim Carrey as Truman Burbank, an ordinary guy who wakes up one morning to discover his entire life has been an elaborately choreographed soap opera. The town where he lives is an enormous set, his wife and neighbours are actors, and his every experience since birth has been broadcast live to a global audience in the hundreds of millions via hidden cameras. Although he is unaware of the fact, Truman Burbank is the most famous man in the world. While he is bored and frustrated by the banality of his smalltown life — maddeningly chipper wife, spirit-crushing job as an insurance salesman — his fans empathise with each one of his everyday struggles. In him, they see themselves.

Primarily, *The Truman Show* is a movie about the complex relationship of dependency and abuse America has with its mass media. Yet it is also a film of particular relevance to Britain in the late Nineties. Gaze at the ranks of today's high profile young celebrities and many seem to be as ordinary and unremarkable as Truman Burbank. Zoe Ball, Chris Evans, Denise Van Outen, Louise Nuding, Emma Noble, Johnny Vaughan, Melanie Sykes: these are stars popular enough to command tabloid front covers, a prize bid to TV and radio show ratings and release records that go to the top of the charts. And yet, and yet, there is something impressive, something incorporeal, about the nature of their fame.

Watching them or reading what is said about them, it is difficult to discern why they are of interest. Apart, that is, from the fact that they are famous. Yet this is exactly why they are so popular.

Take, for example, Louise Nuding. Born in east London 23 years ago, she is a pop star of demure, doe-eyed beauty who became a tabloid favourite with her engagement to the pool player, Jamie Redknapp. In her two year solo career, Louise has evidenced little in the way of charisma, wit or grand ambition. She is in every respect the girl next door made good. Because she is polite and bland and, likeable, she is ideal tabloid fodder, while for her fans, she is a blank canvas on which they can project their own desires. Girls see in her a woman they could be and men imagine a girl they could marry.

What you see with Louise is what you get. A decade ago

this would never have been enough. Then, we were used to stars like Madonna, who reinvented herself over and over, plundering the imagery of old Hollywood in an attempt to become an icon herself. Today we are wary of such vanity. There is, among the public, a greater awareness of the process of manufacture involved in creating a star. We know they are not simply born. Instead, like Liz Hurley, the role model for recent big night out scene stealers like Denise Van Outen (that ash-tray) and Emma Noble (that dress), they must seize their moment and spin it and spin it until the result is newspaper headlines, TV appearances and lucrative product endorsements. Thanks to the media's own obsession with spin, we are all less naive and more informed about the collusion between event organisers, agents, paparazzi and stars that helps create a tabloid sensation.

Celebrity has traditionally depended on distance to fuel its mystique. That's why Garbo is still revered. But as paparazzi lenses get longer and longer, the famous get closer and closer until finally the veil falls and we realise there is nothing different about them compared to us.

The outcome of this is programmes like *The Big Breakfast*, which invites audiences to gaze at the construction of a TV star and recognise it for what it is: artifice and commerce. Perhaps surprisingly, there is little cynicism involved here. It is as though presenters Johnny Vaughan and Denise Van Outen have looked at the transience and mutability of their own fame and realised that it is not a precious commodity, but rather a plaything which can be enjoyed as much by those watching the programme as those presenting it. Denise steals an aspidochelone from Buck-

Doe-eyed Louise Nuding evidences little in the way of charisma or wit

Ingham Palace and brandishes it on the show, confident in the knowledge that the act will win her both publicity and a strengthened rapport with the programme's viewers, many of whom might have done the same if presented with the opportunity. While there may be less magic, less mystery to celebrity today, such programmes suggest there is little need to mourn its passing.

At the end of *The Truman Show*, Jim Carrey's hero breaks out of the fake town TV set that has been his home for 30 years. He's not sure what he'll find on the other side and nor, watching his progress, are we. Yet in trading fantasy for reality, he's asserting his right to be an ordinary human being — with all the uniqueness that implies. And maybe that's enough for now.

Ekow Eshun is editor of *Arena* magazine

Ministers' new plans for asylum-seekers will reveal whether they care more about the tabloids — or about fairness

Hands off migrants

Claude Moraes

THE Government will soon launch its asylum and immigration proposals after more than a year of review. Creating a just but pragmatic policy is now within reach, but loaded with difficulties. There is deep political sensitivity, partly due to history, and partly to the way in which a minority of politicians and powerful tabloid papers have led and reinforced negative public opinion.

Recent events, like the Campsfield detention centre "riots", the death of Enoch Powell and the celebration of Windrush bringing West Indian immigrants to the UK 50 years ago, suggest that the cluster of issues around immigration remain powerful and emotive.

Reform of the system will

not be straightforward. Labour has inherited a system now openly described as being in chaos, and therefore has practical as well as political problems to surmount.

The Conservative government adopted a dual policy of "prevention and deterrence". It dealt with pressure of asylum on the UK through "prevention" — imposing visas on asylum producing countries or fining airlines carrying asylum-seekers. Unfortunately, it was impossible to get a visa in a country genuinely in turmoil, while a global network of "agents" provided false documents.

The last government also wanted to "deter" asylum-seekers, and so increased the use of extra-judicial detention in the late 1980s — a situation which continues to cause great concern.

Between prevention and deterrence lay an asylum determination system which now simply does not work. Government and those who represent asylum-seekers agree that it is full of delay and costs too much. The resulting backlog of cases is now huge — 51,000.

International human

This is a chance to draw a line under an unfair and ineffective system

rights obligations, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights, rightly prohibit the return of anyone who faces torture or inhuman treatment, from whatever source it comes, and in some cases the absence of state author-

ity makes it impossible or inhuman to return people. And so the backlog has grown.

What then should the Government do? A major report from Justice and the Asylum Rights Campaign gave a realistic way forward. It said it would be better to grant asylum status earlier in the process, if necessary on a group basis, and with an initial time limit, to people who clearly cannot safely or humanely be removed.

This must come with an allocation of rights, particularly family reunion rights, and with an exception of more permanent status if return is still impossible after an agreed period.

The determination process could then concentrate on dealing effectively with those whose claims are less clear-cut, or not well-founded.



The system must be made more effective, with better-trained staff making decisions based on published guidelines and an independent documentation centre offering objective factual information about the countries and circumstances from which asylum-seekers come.

The appeals procedure should be restructured so that it is capable of setting a strong precedent, without the need to take each individual case to the courts. But no system can work effectively with this huge backlog. The new government now has a unique chance to draw a line under an unfair, ineffective system. It can find fair and imaginative ways of clearing the backlog, and create a system capable of identifying those who need protection and those who do not.

Reform in immigration

policy, the other part of the government review, is also desirable. There should be a family unity agenda restoring visitor appeals rights and other measures building on Labour's scrapping of the unjust "primary purpose" marriage rule. This would send a message to Britain's ethnic minorities, and anyone who believes in fairness, that the new government will do something that is both just and values the huge economic, social and cultural impact of recent immigration.

This will require the political will to change the terms of the debate away from one driven by the tabloids. These issues win no votes, but do give an indication of the moral temperature of the country.

Claude Moraes is director of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

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Celebrity bodies

Jerusalem's walled city

Israel is disingenuous

NO ISSUE in the conflict between Israel and the Arabs is as emotive as Jerusalem. It has been held in its entirety by Israel since the 1967 war and the beat generated by the new plan to extend its boundaries radiates far beyond the city limits. Under the plan, the municipality is to annex land to the west inside Israel's pre-1967 borders — while, more significantly, an expanded "umbrella municipality" is to adopt administrative powers over nearby Jewish towns, including some in the occupied West Bank.

After a chorus of criticism from the US, the EU, Palestinians, Egypt and Jordan, the government of Benjamin Netanyahu continued to insist yesterday that the plan was not political, but intended merely to improve services, attract more investment, tax revenue and industry and to boost the Jewish population. Palestinians argued, equally forcefully, that it will mean more creeping annexation of West Bank land and alter the status of Jerusalem, both issues that are supposed to be negotiated as part of the final stage of the faltering Oslo peace process.

The Likud government, like its Labour predecessor, has never concealed its position that Jerusalem is Israel's "eternal and indivisible" capital. But to dismiss this latest plan as some narrow municipal issue is disingenuous. True, Oslo deliberately leaves Jerusalem aside, along with other

contentious problems like refugees and final borders, but any unilateral action is bound to breach the spirit of the agreement. As so often in the history of the conflict, this row is about creating facts, and specifically about people and land.

The plan was drawn up after a study showed that Jerusalem's Palestinian community would grow to 45 per cent of the city's population by 2020. Redrawing the boundaries would mean a demographic mix of 70 per cent Jews and 30 per cent Arabs in the new municipal area by 2020, a slight increase on the current 29 per cent, with Palestinians accounting for 180,000 of Jerusalem's 630,000 residents.

Jerusalem still has the golden-domed Mosque of Omar and the Western Wall of the ancient Jewish Temple at its heart, but otherwise it has changed beyond recognition since the Six Days War. Then Israel unilaterally annexed the eastern, Jordanian-controlled side of the city and expanded its boundaries in three directions, so it already covers large tracts of land that were part of the West Bank. Palestinians also point out that much of West Jerusalem was conquered by Israel in breach of the United Nations partition plan of 1947. Yet there is even to be a mutually acceptable partition — the only solution to a century of war — the line has to be drawn somewhere. Israel is trying to ensure that it and nobody else determines where that line is.

Robin Cook, representing the EU, stepped into this minefield earlier this year when he visited the settlement site at Har Homa. He was criticised, but in his approach the principle was entirely correct: occupied territory is occupied territory. Israeli commentators say the new plan

would make it easier to link sites like Har Homa, which closes the ring of Jewish settlements round the city, with others like Ma'aleh Adumim on the road to Jericho. Palestinian protests that the plan is a municipal ruse are justified. It contains not a shred of the goodwill and compromise that must be achieved between the two peoples who live in Jerusalem. This move should be condemned as another blow to frail hopes that a meaningful peace can be achieved.

Dome beats time

But will it win hearts and minds?

IT would have been a multi-dimensional tragedy if a project located on the meridian line were not built on time as well as on time. But so far, so good. Tony Blair could be forgiven self-congratulation yesterday as he presided over the topping out of the Millennium Dome, a public project which has — so far — confounded its critics by being built ahead of time and within budget (builders of the private sector rail link to the Channel tunnel, please note). Mr Blair sensibly declared that Lord Rogers' edifice was "too good to be pulled down" and there should be a lasting use for it. Officials at the Dome said that it could survive for hundreds of years if properly maintained. There should be an international competition for the best long-term use of the former contaminated gasworks site.

The Government may be winning the building battle but it has yet to win over the hearts and minds of people. A survey published yesterday by J&B Rare whisky found that nearly twice as many young people

would prefer to celebrate the millennium at Times Square in New York than at Greenwich. But all could change as the site becomes a reality. Both the historic events of 1851 and 1951 were unpopular and slated by the press, but they surprised everyone in the end.

Mr Blair also revealed that £100 million of the £150 million due to be raised from business sponsorship by the end of the year was already assured, suggesting that industry's initial scepticism about the Dome was at last being allayed. Even if it doesn't live up to Mr Blair's hyperbolic expectations ("the greatest day out on Earth in the year 2000") it looks as though it will eventually be a success. This is important for Mr Blair politically because the success of this entrepreneurial endeavour is umbilically linked to the branding of Britain and New Labour's fortunes. If it is a success Labour will milk it to the full. If it fails, then William Hague — who has been distancing himself from the scheme even though it was started by the Conservatives — will run with it for all his political worth. This is a project that clearly must not be allowed to fail.

Fallen prophets

It's the art that matters

"LOVE gives naught but itself," wrote the prophet, "and takes naught but from itself." Sounds good, doesn't it? "Love possesses not nor would it be possessed. For love is sufficient unto itself." All pretty inspiring. Except now it turns out the author of those words, Kahlil Gibran, was not the pure ascetic imagined by the millions who have

drawn comfort from his 1923 bestseller, *The Prophet*. On the contrary, a new biography casts him as a drunken wreck, pursuing numerous affairs and duping the woman who loved and subsidised him. The implication is clear: who can draw strength from the words of the Prophet now we know their author was so desperately flawed? Yesterday also brought more detail of George Orwell's secret life as a government informant, grating on his fellow leftists. Once again: why bother with 1984 and *Animal Farm* now we know both were the jottings of a mere sneak and gossip?

Both Gibran and Orwell are posthumous victims of a growing public fondness for reputation-busting biography. Each month seems to bring a new book, excavating dirt from the life of a great man. Television has got in on the act with the Secret History and Reputations series. Central to the genre is the exposing of a supposed gap between the public work and the private life. Recent victims include sculptor Eric Gill, revealed as a sex maniac of rampant and incestuous appetites; childcare guru Benjamin Spock, exposed as a harsh dad; and liberal economist John Maynard Keynes, outed as an outrageous elitist and snob.

But, while they might be interesting, such revelations should not be devastating. The work still stands, no matter how vile the man or woman who created it. Wagner was an anti-semitic; that doesn't mean the Valkyrie isn't a great opera. T S Eliot's views on race were pretty nasty, but they don't affect the merits of the *Waste Land*. We should remember: many of these figures produced great work because they were haunted by inner demons. We accept that in their art it's time we accepted it in their lives, too.

Letters to the Editor

Dead poets and gay presidents

TROTSKY could hardly have been responsible for Sergei Yesselin's death (Report, June 22). In 1955 Trotsky was not in a position to "ask the secret police" to do anything — Stalin had dispersed the workers' opposition and Trotsky was in a relatively junior position. He was in fact one of the few Bolshevik leaders to support freedom of artistic expression, one reason for his fall from grace. John Medhurst, Hove, E Sussex.

HOW old does George Carey think a boy has to be to be a Christian? Should the Church confirm boys before they are 16? Are Christian children being pressurised by older men with their own agenda to make a lifestyle decision? Is confirming boys at 13 "sending the wrong message"? Peter Wyles, London.

INGRID Seward is reported as saying (Is Edward gay, The Editor, June 13): "I think guys would love the idea of a gay president. I would settle for a gay president. Daniele Entwistle, Nelson, Lancs.

IF British citizenship is dependent upon reciprocal access (Passport statement, June 22), will the Government suspend access to the UK by Channel Islanders until their governments allow UK citizens the right to live there without work permits? Peter Gillings, London.

I AM sure David Puttnam is sincere when he says that the "Oscars for teachers" (Awards plan for teachers, June 19) are not meant to be a substitute for properly rewarding teachers. Unfortunately he is wrong. That is exactly what they are meant to be. Christine Blower, NUT president 1997-1998, London.

According to Radio 5 this morning, the Millennium Dome is sufficiently large "to contain the Albert Hall twice over". Great now they know how many Albert Halls it takes to fill the Hole. David Perkins, London.

Please include a full postal address. We may edit letters.

Shame of asylum rules

LAST week the case brought against nine West Africans in Campfield House Detention Centre collapsed due to unreliable evidence (Rioting case against asylum-seekers falls apart, June 18). Two of the nine have been granted refugee status, but five, although acquitted of the charges, have been transferred to Rochester prison.

The UK's asylum detention policy, more than being reviewed by the Government, has come under scrutiny by the UN Working Party on Arbitrary Detention due to its lack of judicial oversight of the decision to detain. Amnesty International has for many years been particularly concerned about those asylum-seekers held in detention before their merits of their claim have been assessed. Currently, there is no effective legal challenge before a court or similar independent review body. This is in breach of a number of human rights treaties which provide protection from arbitrary detention. Though most asylum-seekers are granted temporary ad-

mission pending the outcome of their claim, at any one time there are between 750 and 800 held in detention, half in prison, their only "crime" to have applied for asylum. The Home Secretary has said no one is held in detention merely because they have sought asylum, but recent statistics given in a parliamentary written answer show that of the 752 asylum-seekers held in detention, more than half were awaiting an initial decision on their claim, and more than 20 had been detained for longer than a year.

The decision to detain an asylum-seeker is taken by an immigration officer. A recent report on Campfield by the Chief Inspector of Prisons made over 90 recommendations, most of which have been accepted. The significant exception is judicial oversight of the decision to detain asylum-seekers, the absence of which Amnesty believes is in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights. Detention is used by the Government to attempt to deter asylum-seekers from enter-

ing the UK. Those fleeing human rights violations, who may be held in detention for an indefinite period with no opportunity to challenge the decision, have fewer rights than those who are suspected of terrorist activity. The Government should stop the shameful practice of arbitrarily detaining asylum-seekers. Jean Shaw, Refugee officer, Amnesty International, London.

THE case against the Campfield asylum-seekers has shown up the attitude towards this vulnerable group of people. The policy of this Government towards refugees and asylum-seekers should be more widely publicised. Group 4 has just been given an award for the manner in which it runs Campfield House. The minister, Michael O'Brien, says he has the utmost confidence in Group 4. Michael O'Brien ought to take the award away and apologise to a group of people who have been disgracefully treated. Diana McKell, Oxford.

Benchmarks

CHRIS Woodhead (Twaddle to you, June 19) was right to assert the importance of "truth, accuracy, fairness" in matters concerning the effectiveness of schools, their inspection and correction of any imperfections. But for all schools to be successful, we need to use and generate more evidence about performance differences between children as well as schools.

Using free school meals, for example, as an all-purpose proxy for disadvantage just isn't good enough. What about the challenges faced by schools and families in the inner city, as opposed to postwar estates on the edge of our cities? What about the children of Indian and African Caribbean or Bangladeshi families? Likewise, instead of personalising the efficiency of teachers, why not analyse the impact of teacher turnover rates, length of service and whether teachers are teaching their specialist subject? Pupil turnover is a further issue, as is the "critical mass" of well-motivated and parentally supported pupils.

As a former headteacher and chief education officer, I believe Ofsted has made a positive contribution. It does press me that Chris Woodhead appears to demonise those who express qualified support, and ask for a cooler, properly informed debate. Prof Margaret Madden, Keele University.

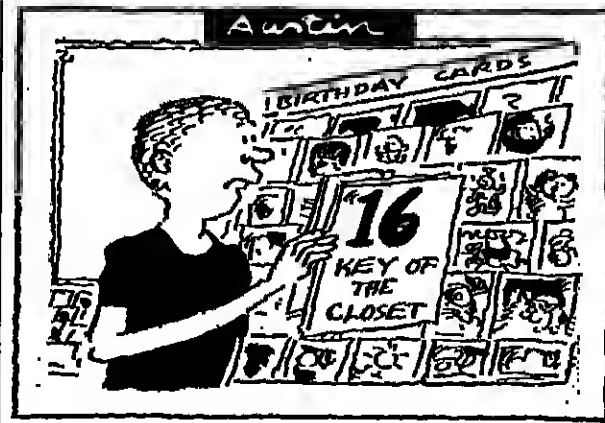
DECCA Aitkenhead (Comment, June 12) is right to call Ofsted a flop. Anyone could have guessed that humiliating schools with "unsatisfactory" exam results would lead to an exodus to "good" schools. One should also think about classifying "best and worst" schools purely by exam results and mickymouse snapshot inspections.

This ignores the work schools do with pupils who are not likely to get good exam results. It seems pretty clear Ofsted distracts schools from what they should be doing. After all, any teacher facing inspection knows only critical comment can be made, and the money wasted on preliminary paperwork before inspections in a cash-strapped service is the final obscenity. D Powicke, Minister on Sea, Kent.

Peer group

MR Blair's use of patronage in relation to knights, hoods and life peerages is increasingly worrying. It seems that in many cases the recipients have had pockets deep enough to attend one or more of 9450 celebrity fund-raising dinners, to become members of the £1000 club or put money into so-called blind funds to finance the offices in opposition of Mr Blair and others now in his Cabinet. The people concerned may well be good citizens deserving their elevation, but this is an area where transparency is essential and where substantial political donations should be an absolute bar to preferment. Beryl Urquhart OBE, Bridgewater, Somerset.

THOUGH an unemployed, single mother and new age traveller, I think we should keep the Lords as we need some form of power that is not under Tony Blair's control. It is clear he only wants to get rid of the Lords because he is a raving megalomaniac. A Miller, Stroud, Glos.



Making houseroom for the poor

GEORGE Monbiot does well to highlight the need to give greater attention to social housing in regional plans (The Poor Don't Exist, June 18). However, he does the case for meeting housing needs no favours by criticising those who believe less is required than the Government's trend-based household projections suggest.

Regional planners in the South-east are rising to the challenge set by John Prescott and taking the first steps away from the "predict and provide" approach which has served us so badly. The problem is that not enough new homes are affordable, and a significant proportion of the existing stock is vacant or in poor condition. There is little point in allocating more land for social housing that will not be built because of lack of resources.

The way forward lies in making sure a much greater share meets social needs, with regional planning targets, and that development reflects the capacity of the environment to accommodate change. There we will find Prescott's "urban renaissance", better protection for rural England and improved access to homes for those who need them. Tony Burton, Assistant Director, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, London.

GEORGE Monbiot is wrong on the proposal by Serpell to reduce the number of new single-person households needed: it is not an attack on the poor and defenceless. Projections are based on a single person will be able to afford their own dwelling but not want to live separately, and the rate at which single households are formed through divorce is partly offset by many pairing up again. Plans should make provision for the best estimate of numbers of all kinds of household to ensure that excessive development is avoided.

By reducing overall numbers Serpell will reduce mismatching, contrary to Monbiot's accusation. Society should meet all housing needs, but if it lacks political will and fails to provide funding, we must prevent unmet needs being transformed into more greenfield building. Cllr Harvey Cole, Winchester, Hants.

Astor's Cliveden

YOUR report on Bill Gates' investment in Cliveden failed to mention that the estate is owned by the National Trust. The property continues to be open to the public, and under the terms of the lease to the hotel, access to part of the house is guaranteed. On Thursday and Sunday afternoons from April to October visitors may view the Sargent portrait of Nancy Astor, as well as the French dining room where she held her famous parties. Changes to the ownership of shares will not affect these arrangements. You also refer to Cliveden as the home of the Hitler-loving fast set. This is unfair. Although Lady Astor was involved in attempts at Anglo-German diplomacy and had right-wing acquaintances, she also had socialist friends, including George Bernard Shaw. Astors served in both world wars, and Lord Astor gave over a site on the estate for a military hospital in both conflicts. A memorial cemetery was created at Cliveden, now cared for by the National Trust with the War Graves Commission. I hope that this puts the Astors' wartime role into perspective. Carl Shillito, Property manager, Cliveden Estate, Berkshire.

Crack squad

WHEN I was a young train-spotter in the forties, a familiar figure at mainline stations was the wheel-tapper, a man with a hammer on a pole who walked along the line, tapping wheels and listening for the tell-tale sound telling him there was a crack. It seems fairly certain that the crack in Germany and the recent derailment in Bedfordshire, both at high speed, were caused by cracked wheels. I haven't seen a wheel-tapper for years; do they still exist, or is this another down-stating too far? Mike Broadbent, Luton, Bedfordshire.

ANY regular rail-user will "have been aware of the 'tattoo' caused by 'flats' on the wheels of high-speed trains which causes stress both on wheels and bearings by continuous 'hammering'". Doubtless the leasing companies consider it too costly to withdraw rolling-stock for corrective wheel "turning", but when the shareholders of these concerns are wheeling their gains to the bank, they could give a thought to passengers suffering the racket and risk resulting from their companies' parsimony. P A Blencowe, Churchdown, Glos.

Oxbridge makes collegiate response to Tusa's criticism

SOME of the senior Fellows of Wolfson College, Cambridge, played a part in encouraging John Tusa to allow his name to go forward for election as president (Jolly bad fellows, June 20). I was sorry when he resigned. I felt that the attitudes and behaviour of some senior members towards him were regrettable. However, the faults are not all on one side. Tusa was impatient and at times arrogant. I also find it surprising that, given he spent so little time in Cambridge and so much in London (by agreement), he glanced enough to be able to assert that colleges are "decorative but not essential to the work of a university". It is not surprising that his sojourn in the university — whose strength lies in the fact that it is collegiate — was unhappy. Bill Kirkman, Cambridge.

IT is only natural that John Tusa should seize the opportunity provided by Judge Stephen Tumin's departure as an Oxford college principal to get his own back on the fellows of Wolfson College, but

it is a pity you add to the media stereotyping of Oxbridge colleges as ludicrously Bridesheadish places. This has prevented any serious discussion over past moorings of Oxbridge's place in the national education system. Contrary to what Tusa claims, Oxford colleges already publish accounts, and they are not insouciant to the work of a university. The colleges are the university, and serious, well-run institutions which, in current jargon, deliver an excellent product. Averil Cameron, Warden, Keble College, Oxford.

HAD to sigh at John Tusa's recollection of his wife, Ann, being asked by a Cambridge don, "Do you do anything to keep yourself out of mischief, Mrs Tusa?" An Oxford friend of mine once asked if his wife, a London lawyer, was included in his invitation to a college garden party. "Lord, yes," came the reply. "We shall need all the help with the teas we can get." Anne Fine, Barnard Castle, Co Durham.

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Ode to nationalism more like hymn to white man's burden

JONATHAN Freedland makes an ambitious but confused attempt to reclaim nationalism as a progressive force for the Left (June 20). He is clearly on safe ground excavating the neglected dissenting tradition of the Levellers, Tom Paine, Blake, Mary Wollstonecraft and Shelley to which he adds Orwell, William Morris and R H Tawney. But he is guilty of a misguided revisionism if he thinks this same dissenting tradition can accommodate the British empire as an "example of early internationalism that lives to this day". His argument that colonised peoples of the British empire were spared the barbarism committed by other imperial

powers is fallacious and lends itself to Kipling's myth of the white man's burden. Steven Garside, Manchester.

JONATHAN Freedland's nationalist diatribe is profoundly naive. While it can be argued that nationalism is a form of identity based on notions of commonality and community, it is also founded on the exclusion of others, and cannot be open and inclusive since it articulates a geographically "bounded community". Freedland's talk of "gender, class, race, and religion" is founded upon a history of suffering. Ignoring the role of nationalism in creating that suffering, and how "gentler"

nationalisms can be utilised to justify prejudice and violence towards the excluded, Palestinian nationalism has been largely a reaction to Zionism, itself born from exclusion and suffering. Freedland's call for a reformulation of nationalism is dangerous, since such a project can be hijacked by the Right. A safer solution would be the nurturing of inclusive, global identities. To reject nationalism is not to give a posthumous victory to Thatcherism, rather it is a positive rejection of the "Falklands mentality" of Thatcherism and the petty, egocentric tribalism of English football supporters. Dave Lewis, London.

IN the first century BC Horace said: "Sport begets tumultuous strife and wrath, and wrath begets fierce quarrel and war to the death." Things haven't changed much. Patricia Lockett, Somerton, Somerset.

IF the hooligans had been smoking cannabis, there would have been no violence. They would love everybody and they just wouldn't be bothered. John Fleming, Scunthorpe, Lincs.

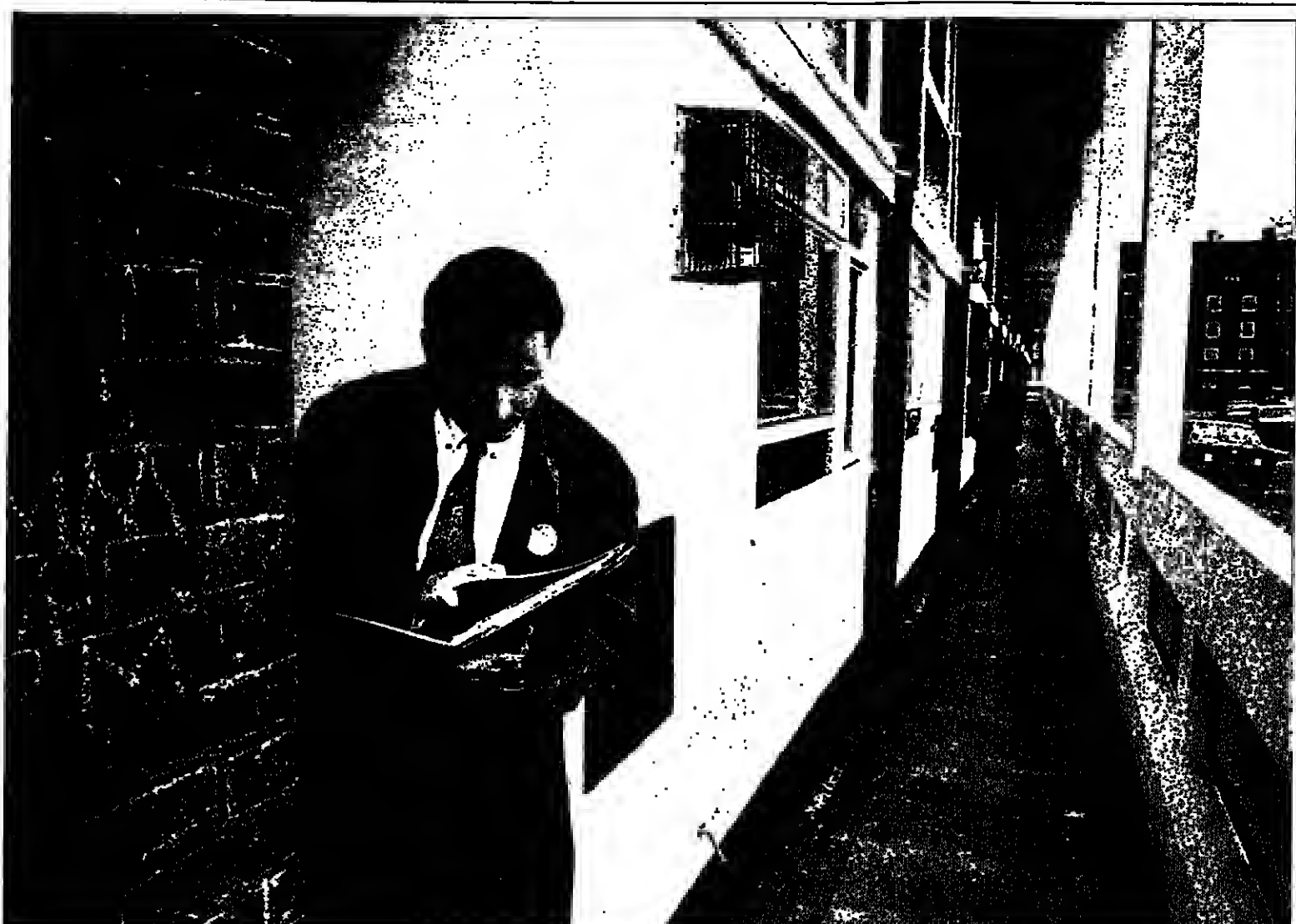
FIFTEEN years in Chateau D'If should cure them. Frank McFarlane, Stevenage, Herts.

Analysis Party membership



Labour is embarrassed over the leak of figures showing it has been losing members recently – but only because it thought it could buck the historical trend against mass membership in political parties. **Ewen MacAskill** says there are fewer and fewer party people, home and abroad

Stuff that envelope, say the activists



LABOUR Party membership is in decline. But nobody gave Tony Blair the bad news. Headquarters at Millbank, where the figures are collated, seems not to have passed on the information to a Prime Minister basking in personal popularity.

Now Downing Street is conducting an inquiry into how such a break-down in communication could happen in its famed machine for political communication. One party worker, putting on a brave face yesterday, said it was better to have it out now: "The longer we are in denial mode the worse it gets".

His political instincts had warned him. In the aftermath of the lone parent revolt last autumn, Mr Blair contacted Millbank to check if there had been a backlash among the membership. He was completely told that the party was merely treading water. In reality there had been a spate of considered resignations and numbers had failed to renew their membership.

Just how bad the news is depends on a context of confidence. Before the general election, Labour had set itself a target of 450,000 individual members, keen to emulate the kind of mass membership achieved by European social democratic parties (1). Earlier this year, the party put membership at 406,000 and the official line has been to describe itself as the "fastest growing party in Western Europe".

Now the cold water. Over the weekend, the party conceded that membership has fallen, to around 385,000. A party source said that if the number of members who are in arrears on their subscriptions are stripped out, the figure may even be lower.

Numbers look even worse if set against a target of one million members announced ten years ago. Gordon Brown was

given the job of spearheading the campaign. The fanfare has long since become muted. The official line: "In the very broadest, long-term basis that is still our aim. No-one is saying we will have a million by the next election. That would require a dramatic increase." An understatement.

Labour leaders are sensitive about decline. Is it, as cynical left-wingers claim, that members are leaving in droves, disillusioned by Blairism, especially the treatment of lone parents? Or is it more mundane, as Labour headquarters suggests. Many people joined in the excitement of the run-up to the general election but have merely not bothered to renew their subscriptions.

Labour did set itself an impossible target. Joining is not fashionable. Party membership is in secular decline: numbers of paid-up adherents have been falling decade after decade, across the parties. And not only in Britain. In Scandinavia, the cradle of social democracy, membership is dropping off. Only Austria and Germany have seen increases. But patronage may play a part in those corporatist societies. Membership of a party in Austria has often been a prerequisite for gaining a council house and jobs in Germany are often dependent on membership (2).

Parties have been losing out to single-issue pressure groups. The kind of idealism once associated with Labour, This Great Movement of Ours has been transferred to crusades such as protection of the environment. Michael Pinto-Duschinsky of Brunel University says: "Politics does not have the idealism that it sometimes did and it is more a matter of careerism than idealism." He makes the point that the decline of formal politics may be a welcome reflection of the end of large-scale

ideological conflict (in western countries) associated with the end of the Cold War.

If Labour has worries, so do the Tories. Mr Pinto-Duschinsky has detailed the startling decline of the Conservative Party, which has dropped from 1.3 million in 1974 to between 800,000 and 350,000, the official Central Office estimate for this year.

For all the parties, the glory years have gone for ever. Labour's peak membership was in the early 1950s when it just reached the magical figure of one million sought by Mr Brown (3). Decline was marked in 1960s under the Wilson government. Disillusionment set in among activists, upset at the lack of a socialist agenda; many young people were disgusted with the Wilson government's support for the United States in Vietnam.

BUT IT was in the 1980s that numbers really tailed off. Labour suffered as the constituencies were wracked by infighting. When Mr Blair became leader in 1994, membership was only 250,000; until now, he had been proud of his achievement in pushing that up.

Against that background, the fall during recent months to 385,000 may not look disastrous. But surely Labour, still riding high in the polls, should not be falling back now. The Government has years to run, and more critical decisions to take. Still in the flush of victory, Labour might have expected the rise to continue, fuelled not least from those wanting to be associated with success. There are base reasons for being a party member, to do with patronage and preferment. The failure of Labour to benefit from its success suggests the reasons why people will not participate in formal politics are deep-

seated and permanent; to do perhaps with changes in life style and the balance of private and public space in people's lives.

Decline is inevitable. The achievements of the early fifties sprang partly out of the idealism that followed the Second World War, the determination to build a better world. But in those days political party membership also offered a social life, even fun. Labour offered an opportunity to meet like-minded people, the opposite sex and cheap booze. Membership of the Conservative Party was even more of a social investment. Today, people have a much bigger variety of places to meet and be entertained.

Boredom is also a factor. A recent internal party survey shows one of the commonest dislikes among party members is the constituency meeting and its paraphernalia (4). New members can so easily be put off by long-term members deeply imbedded in the rule-book. The word is "anorak".

Minutes of the last meeting. Matters arising. It is a culture based on rules rather than allowing people to express political ideas.

Evidently there are those who have been upset at what they see as the failure of Mr Blair and Mr Brown to deliver a brave new world within twelve months. Anecdotal evidence suggests that activists, though upset by some of the policies, have stayed in the party to fight. Defections have come from people who signed up for the party, paying their subscriptions but not actively involved in knocking on doors.

The Liberal Democrats have a membership of around 100,000, which has remained stable since the ructions of the merger between the Liberals and the Social Democratic Party ten years ago. Membership initially was less than the

combined membership of the two parties. It has a strong participatory membership, with a high number of its members actively involved as councillors.

The Conservatives, under the Asda boss Archie Norman, are reforming their party and this summer will have their first centralised membership system. They have always been coy about releasing figures but after the new system is in place this summer will have no excuse.

IS A MASS membership party necessary? Parties need a core of people in each constituency to carry out canvassing, leafletting and conveying people to the polling booths. Computers could soon take over many of these tasks. And IT and the net will also make it easier for the party leader to speak directly to his membership and to hear their views.

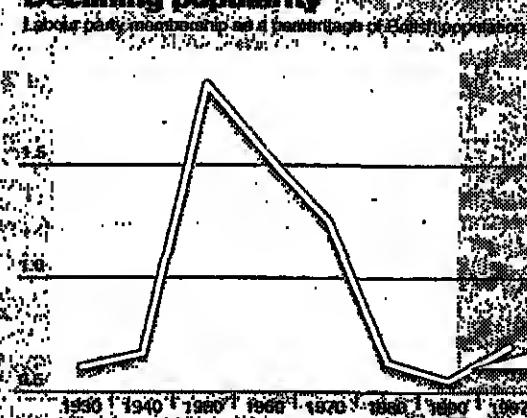
But Labour's internal surveys show, not surprisingly, that the party does better in those constituencies where it has a big contingent of members. There are heartland seats where it will do well whoever is the party candidate but in comparable seats, the party with the healthiest local membership is set to do better.

Participation, says an old argument, is good for democracy. Yet Labour, like the Conservatives, has been guilty in the past of asking members along to constituency meetings just to lick stamps and perform menial tasks, rather than allowing them to engage in full debate. The Labour leadership argues that this is what its recent reforms are designed to achieve: the left counters that the opposite is being achieved.

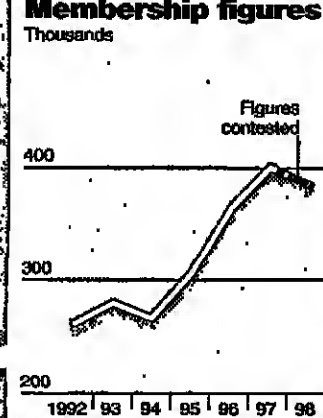
An American prospect beckons where most "activists" are paid and democratic participation by members in deciding

Party animals: Who joins in Britain

Declining popularity



Membership figures



Parties claim
Total number of direct members, 1998

Party	Members (Thousands)
Labour	385
Conservative	800
Lib Dem	100
SNP	30
Plaid Cymru	5

party policy is strictly limited. For the historical trend is against mass parties. If the decline in the Tory Party has been dramatic, Labour's attempts to buck the trend and push its membership upwards now look doomed.

Sources: (1) Party Organizations: A data handbook, edited by Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, Sage Publications, 1992. (2) Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, senior research fellow at Brunel University, at a post-election conference at Essex. (3) British Political Facts, David Butler and Gareth Butler, Macmillan. (4) Labour internal document, unpublished.

Graphic sources: Party Organizations: A data handbook, edited by Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, party headquarters; Annual Abstract of Statistics, 1998, ONS. Graphics: Finbar Sheehy. Research: Matthew Keating. Ewen MacAskill is the Guardian's Chief Political Correspondent.

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FinanceGuardian

Yen slides, billionaires are battered . . . and Marks can't afford to open Down Under

Japan builds 'bridge' to save banks

Alex Brummer in Tokyo

JAPAN yesterday moved decisively towards setting up a "bridge bank" designed to take on the bad loans of failing lenders and prevent a series of bankruptcies among leading banks.

The difficulties of the ailing Long Term Credit Bank (LTCB) deepened as its shares plunged a further 44 per cent and speculation intensified that it would be absorbed by other banks, or could become the first customer of the bridge bank.

The urgent need for a solution to Japan's banking crisis was underlined when the yen resumed its slide on the foreign exchanges, falling four yen to 137.84 against the dollar.

Despite the uncertainty sur-

rounding the LTCB, one of the nation's leading corporate lenders, the Tokyo stock market seemed convinced that the authorities were finally ready to act on banking reform. The Nikkei index climbed 41.11 points to 15,309.09.

Tokyo's confidence that the government had decided to "bridge bank" followed a summit between two of the most powerful figures in the country. Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Prime Minister, and Koichi Kato, the secretary general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

The two agreed on establishing the bank and a facility to take on the bad loans by July 8, four days before Upper House elections.

The nation's two leading politicians clearly have decided that the uncertainty hanging over the banking system must be resolved to assure voters that the economy will not worsen after the election and prevent the yen weakening further on the foreign exchanges. Every time the yen falls, the capital ratios of the Japanese banking system weakens, pushing it near to insolvency.

Despite daily denials from the LTCB that it is in difficulty, speculation persisted that it is desperately trying to offload its loan book to two other banks Dai-ichi Kangyo, or Daiwa Bank, with neither said to be enthusiastic about taking on the job.

The LTCB crisis spelled a baptism of fire for the new Financial Supervisory Agency, which opened for business



Masaharu Hino says his FSA aims to prevent risk spreading throughout the system

PHOTOGRAPH: ERIKO SUGITA

yesterday. Its boss, Masaharu Hino made it clear that the agency was there to "protect" debentures, deposits and the interbank transactions of financial institutions as part of a broader effort to prevent systemic risk spreading throughout the banking system.

One of the agency's first tasks was to order an inspection of 19 of the country's top banks, which have between

them an estimated debt of Yen 77 trillion (\$543.4 billion).

If LTCB were to become the first customer of the bridge bank, because it is unable to forge a private sector merger, it would first be required to use all its available capital to dispose of bad debts. It would then sell off the non-performing loans to the Deposit Insurance Corporation, another new government agency. The LTCB would receive a new in-

fusion of taxpayers' funds and continue to service remaining customers under formal government supervision. In effect, it would be nationalised.

Government officials make no secret of their fears that if the banking problem is not resolved rapidly, the slide of Japan from recession to depression will not be avoided. If the banking problem is not fixed now, the economic measures will not be effective,

said Akira Furukawa, a senior economic adviser to the Prime Minister's office.

Despite Japan's rush to repair its banking system, there is scepticism in Tokyo. Among the expected difficulties are legal barriers to a free market in bad loans, a lack of qualified bank inspectors and a shortage of capital in the system. To absorb problem loans without the infusion of new government funds,

Notebook

The man with the golden smile



Edited by Lisa Buckingham

IT IS always tempting to flirt with the idea that the Fatas will not forever have Richard Branson and his Virgin group. Railways have appeared for some time the most likely candidate to tarnish the golden smile of Britain's best loved entrepreneur.

Railways attract a unique level of consumer opprobrium and the problems of the west coast and cross-country routes seemed sufficiently ghastly to be immune to the public relations gloss which is the stuff of Virgin's slick organisation.

When the whisper started to go round the City that Branson would be lucky to get the flotation of the rail business off the ground, it seemed Virgin might finally have met its Waterloo.

The timing didn't appear brilliant. City investors are about to be visited by SEC Warburg and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell trying to lure them to buy bonds to refinance London & Continental Railways, the channel link group which would have gone belly up but for a government bailout.

And despite staff turnover in the City, most investment managers can still remember being shafted over Eurotunnel.

A share in most parts of Britain's railways is not this season's fashion accessory. It was easy to imagine Mr Branson being shamed the door and forced into the arms of an unlikely suitor. But he has emerged with a remarkable deal from Stagecoach's Brian Scooter.

He has secured about \$30 million more than a float was expected to raise, and Virgin has ended up with a 51 per cent majority of the company when it started with only 41 per cent.

Importantly, Virgin is shielded from the direct prying of stock market eyes and from the short-term demands of the City on an industry where gains may come only in the longer term.

This round then to the man in the woolly jumper.

Loosening peg

THE idea that the week-end meeting of G7 finance deputies would produce a surprise package to turn the Japanese economy around was always a little far fetched.

If there was an easy solution to the country's twin banking and economic crises, it would have been staring everyone in the face for years. However, the lack of fireworks didn't prevent the currency markets registering their disappointment at the lack of concrete action.

£30m secures Sealine buy-in

David Gow

A MANAGEMENT buy-in team led by Midlands industrialist Gerard Wainwright yesterday paid £30 million for Sealine International, one of the world's leading makers of luxury motor yachts - based in landlocked Kidderminster.

"It's about as far from the sea as you can get," said Mr Wainwright, who has in recent years operated as a company doctor turning around ailing firms and now intends accelerating Sealine's sales to affluent individuals and cash-rich corporations in the Americas and Europe.

Sealine was originally founded in 1972 as a three-man sub-contracting opera-

After rallying last week when the US Federal Reserve intervened on its behalf, the yen weakened again yesterday against the dollar, putting renewed pressure on other ailing economies in the region to devalue to restore competitiveness.

China was the focus of such fears last week, yesterday it was Hong Kong's turn in the spotlight.

The province's leader, Tung Chee-hwa, said the economic situation there was "very critical". In order to make sure the severity of that position was lost on no-one, Mr Tung chose the rather dramatic route of a live television broadcast to make his point.

Although he vowed to defend the Hong Kong-US dollar peg, that linkage might not survive a full-blown recession that now looks like a racing certainty.

Unfortunately for Britain's hard-pressed manufacturers, the pound has also been caught up in the backwash of the yen's turmoil. The yen's weakness has reinforced sterling's safe-haven status and, combined with expectations of another interest rate rise, helped power the currency back through the DM3 barrier.

If there is a consolation in this (apart, of course, from those holiday-makers just about to set off for the Continent) it is that the Bank of England's monetary policy committee will presumably think twice before raising interest rates again.

When it raised rates earlier this month, it cited the inflationary dangers of the falling pound and rising average earnings.

With one of those two threats removed, the MPC will be hard-pressed to mount a defence of another increase in the cost of borrowing from the current level of 7.5 per cent.

Maxwell's ghost

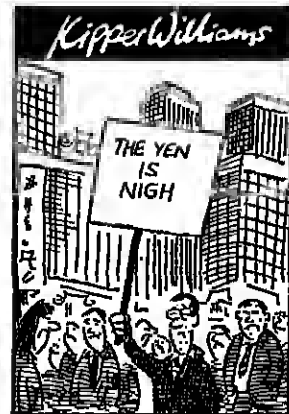
ANOTHER corporate governance code beckons and still so little to show for it.

As the Stock Exchange dots the 'i's on the corporate governance combined code (an amalgam of Cadbury, Greenbury and Hampel) it seems voting levels at annual meetings have dropped, according to a survey by the Manifest proxy agency.

That is despite all the ballyhoo from Margaret Thatcher about how much importance is placed on corporate governance.

There should be no surprise, however. The corporate governance crusade was born of business collapses such as Polly Peck and Maxwell, companies borne high on the bubble of the 1980s but which crashed to earth with recession. In today's relatively temperate economic climate the need for corporate governance vigilance seems less compelling.

But the Government and City would be wrong to allow the debate to cool. The need for rigorous boardroom standards may once again be just around the corner.



M&S ditches Australia plan

Roger Cowe

MARKS & SPENCER yesterday abandoned plans to launch in Australia, saying the slump in the country's currency would make it impossible to sell clothes exported from Britain at acceptable prices that fitted its value-for-money reputation.

Australia has been particularly hard hit since 60 per cent of its exports go to countries in the region. Exports to South-east Asia so far this year are a quarter below last year's level. As a result, the Australian dollar has plunged by a quarter over the past 16 months to a 12-year low.

Paul Smith, the M&S Asia Pacific chief executive, said yesterday: "We have concluded that opening Marks & Spencer stores in Australia under the current economic conditions is no longer viable. The recent change in the value of the Australian dollar has increased the cost of imported merchandise and selling prices would therefore have to be higher."

M&S had reached an agreement with a local retailer, Just Jeans Group, to open a Marks & Spencer franchise network, beginning with stores in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, as part

of the British retailer's international expansion.

Mr Smith stressed that the partners banded to revive opening plans if the Australian dollar makes a recovery. He said: "We remain confident in the long-term potential of the Australian market and we will be monitoring the situation closely to decide on a suitable time to open stores. Australia is still very much part of Marks & Spencer's strategy."

International expansion has been a key part of the British retailer's strategy during the 1990s, and it began researching entry into Australia in 1996. A franchise agreement was struck with Just Jeans last November, since when the two companies have been looking for sites and drawing up detailed plans to sell M&S clothing in stores operated by Just Jeans.

But the Asian slump has hit the group's profits in its wholly-owned Hong Kong franchise and damaged its franchise business elsewhere in Asia.

M&S is still committed to the franchise concept, which has seen 85 stores bearing the famous British logo spring up throughout Europe, the Middle East and Asia. The group is on the verge of making a decision about entry into the South American market.

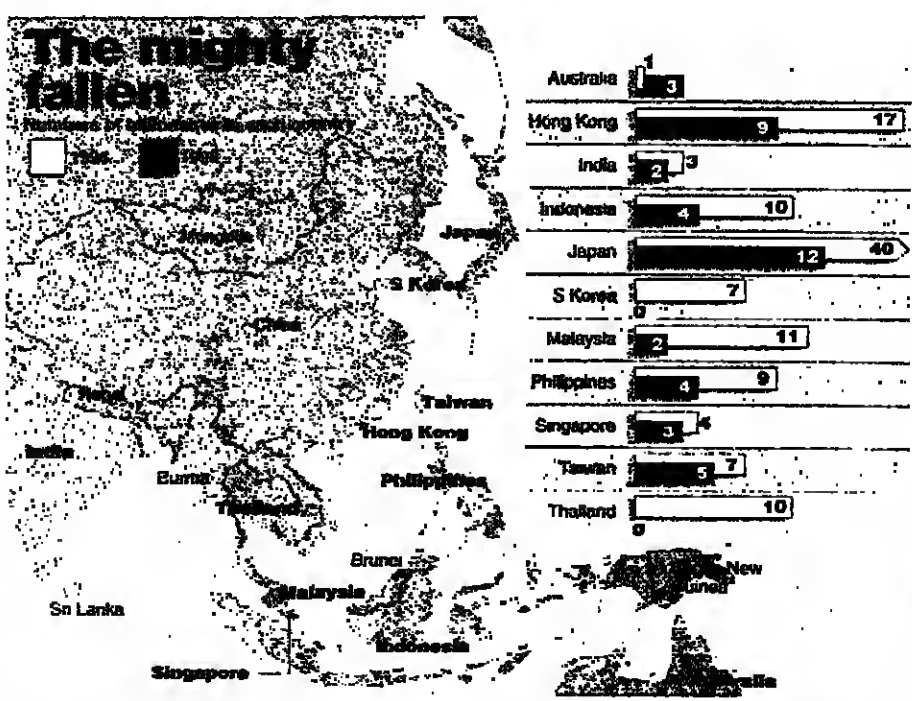
Crisis culls list of Asia's super rich

Mark Tran and Mark Atkinson

IT HAS been a bad year for the ordinary billionaire in the street. After 18 months of corporate crashes, banking nerves, falling currencies and rising unemployment, only now are the true individual victims of the Asian crisis being revealed.

According to the latest rich list in Forbes magazine, the number of billionaires in the region was just 44 this year, down from 56 last year and 119 in 1996.

That issue had trumpeted the East's new wealth. "It's Asia's turn," Forbes blared at the time, getting swept up with Asia's triumphalism. Two years later, it is back to more familiar ground, with Rupert Murdoch, the globe-trotting



media tycoon, as Forbes' favourite billionaire. As for Asia, well there is no more talk of the Asian century. Thailand, for example, has seen its billionaires wiped out.

Asia's richest man remains the Sultan of Brunei, whose wealth comes from oil and gas. His fortune is estimated at \$36 billion, down \$2 billion from last year. The biggest decline was by former Indonesian President Suharto, forced to resign last month in the face of massive public protests. His wealth

dwindled by three-quarters to \$4 billion and his fortune can be expected to shrink as his family's control over vast state enterprises is reduced.

The richest man in Asia who works for a living now is Lee Shan Kee, owner of Henderson Land Development Corporation in Hong Kong. The collapse in property prices shaved nearly \$2 billion off the 70-year-old property tycoon's wealth. He is now worth \$12.7 billion, making him ninth-richest in the world instead of fourth. Cheung

Kong (Holdings) and Hutchison Whampoa chairman Li Ka-shing, another Hong Kong resident, is Asia's second-richest private citizen. His overall ranking rose to 13th from 15th yet he saw his fortune fall 9 per cent to \$10 billion.

Tsai wan Lin and family members of Taiwan were next in Asia. The founder of Cathay Life Insurance and the Lin-Yuan Group, who got his start behind a fruit and vegetable stand in Taipei is worth about \$8.5 billion, down 25 per cent from last year.

Phoney deals of 'development fever' take toll

John Gittings in Hong Kong

BEIJING has closed down a leading provincial bank, shaking China's financial system. The Hainan Development Bank was ordered to cease operations while its debts are being guaranteed to avoid panic.

The Bank is one of a select

group in China's development zones which was given considerable latitude in the boom years. It is based on the island of Hainan, which has long been known for financial scams and sharp operations.

The People's Bank of China, operating with another national bank, has taken over its liabilities and is investigating its performance. The

capital and interest owed to all "legitimate" investors on the island and from outside will be protected, the People's Bank said on Sunday.

Chinese financial circles are particularly concerned because the Hainan Development Bank ranks only just below the four national banks in status. Beijing's action is intended to send a sharp signal

that it will intervene promptly to prevent a collapse of confidence. Hainan's troubles are a result of years of "development fever" that swept China when the late Deng Xiaoping kickstarted economic reforms after the Tiananmen Square massacre. Many unscrupulous entrepreneurs, particularly property companies,

traded in land that technically belonged to the state.

There followed a spate of insolvencies and last December Hainan Development Bank was ordered by the island's authorities to assume responsibility for several debt-ridden credit co-operatives in the provincial capital of Haikou. These had offered high interest rates in 1993-1994 and

the capital was used to invest in risky property deals.

Although Beijing closed down ten financial institutions last year, the collapse of this leading commercial bank is regarded as much more serious. It is also being argued that the central authorities cannot continue to take responsibility for all bad debts in the provinces.

Italy Versus

It'll be a game of

and po

Perfume

Wimbledon 98



Henman to the fore... Britain's No. 2 in first-round action during his five-set thriller yesterday against Jiri Novak of the Czech Republic

PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE HEWITT

Nervy Henman at full stretch

Stephen Bierley sees a stubborn Czech come perilously close to bouncing out Britain's error-prone No.2 at the very first hurdle

TIM HENMAN strained his nerves and those of his many supporters to the limit yesterday before winning his opening match 7-6, 7-5, 5-7, 4-6, 6-2 against Jiri Novak of the Czech Republic on No.1 Court.

Novak arrived in London only yesterday morning, having won a second-division tournament on clay the previ-

ous day. He managed only a little practice before facing the British No.2 but rose to the challenge to stretch the match beyond the three-hour mark.

The Czech, ranked No. 71 in the world and with only one senior career singles title to his name, has never progressed beyond the second round of any Grand Slam event and has won only one

match here. But suddenly he appeared as if a giant in front of the nerve-racked and struggling Henman.

Two successive Wimbledon quarter-finals had led Henman to suggest he expected to reach the final four this year. Such expectations appeared to drag at his feet like diver's boots. At the end he sank down on his chair and gazed, tight-faced, into the crowd. It

was an almighty fright for him and it will have taken a physical and mental toll.

This was exactly the sort of start he did not need, for his physique has always been suspect over the course of a two-week tournament.

Novak, like Henman a 29-year-old, was understandably off-key having been playing on a different surface some 24 hours earlier; it was less easy to excuse Henman's multitude of errors. He can only hope that he has expunged them from his system in one go.

Initially Henman's nerves appeared to be under control as he easily broke Novak's serve in the fourth game of the first set to take a 3-1 lead. The crowd relaxed, sat back and waited for a comfortable home win.

Then, at 4-2 and leading 30-15, Henman served two dreadful double faults. He scrambled to deuce but an over-hit backhand volley, immediately followed by a forehand-volley error, gave Novak the initiative.

Several times the crowd let out groans of disappointment as Henman either netted volleys or hit his always vulnerable forehand long. Home support is clearly an advantage for Henman and Rusedski but the crowd's frustration when things are not going well can have a detrimental effect.

Both players held their serve to 6-6 and Henman, despite another double fault, kept his game together the better to win the tie-break 7-4. The roar of relief was huge.

The grass courts are always a little slower in the first week, unless the weather is exceptionally hot, and this was an advantage to Novak, giving him that little longer to adjust his shots and generally acclimatise.

Henman nosed ahead in the second set only to be reeled in again by the persistent Czech. However, given Novak's weekend exertions, the match appeared to there on a plate for Briton when he won the second set. Surely his opponent would tire? No, came the emphatic answer.

Again Novak went a break down, as in the two previous

sets but this time he was to come back with a vengeance. The strain was etched across Henman's face; time and again he visibly urged himself on, driving himself to the full against an opponent who was as obdurate as a limpet.

But Novak was well and truly getting into his stride, with the clay of Zagreb shaken off his shoes and the feel of the grass getting sweeter and sweeter. He took the fourth set and by then Henman's alarm bells were ringing doubles and triples. This was a fine mess he had got himself into and the odds against getting out of it did not appear to be short.

However a vital break in the fifth and final set was just enough. Novak's understandable tiredness eventually catching up with him. But Henman was white-faced at the end. He knew how poorly he had played.

Earlier the first men's seed fell when, to the surprise of all but the most optimistic Spaniard Alex Corretja, the No.10, went out to Justin Gimelstob of the United States.

Corretja, beaten by Carlos Moya in the French Open final earlier this month, finds it exceptionally difficult to adjust his game to grass, although Felix Mantilla did reach the second round.

Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the No.7 seed, lost to Mark Philippoussis on Centre Court. The huge-serving Australian had been so disillusioned with his form at Queen's that he threatened to pack his bags and give Wimbledon a miss. How Kafelnikov must have wished he had.

Italy versus Austria

(It'll be a game of two halves... and possibly a slice of pizza.)



Nastro Azzurro would like to wish both teams good fortune and a stylish game. But, being Italy's numero uno beer, you can imagine who we hope will have had a belly full by the final whistle tonight. After all, you have to look after Numero Uno.

Peroni's Nastro Azzurro. Italy's Numero Uno Beer.



Thumbs down for Kournikova

THE All England Club, the tahlolds and the paparazzi alike were left cursing their luck yesterday when the picturesque Anna Kournikova pulled out of Wimbledon through injury. Russia's 17-year-old prodigy (above) fell and strained her right thumb in

beating Steffi Graf at Eastbourne on Thursday. On Sunday, she saw a specialist who confirmed ligament damage. Her place in the draw is taken by Lilia Osterloh of the United States.

Wimbledon, pages 14-15

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Canon

Cricket

Mike Selvey on the pros and cons of putting the opposition in after the decision has backfired on Cronje, then Stewart this season

Caught by the pitch and toss

IF THERE is one thing more certain than the capacity of Alec Stewart's trousers to crumple, it is the prospect of the captain who wins the toss next week for the third Test at Old Trafford, poking his thumb into a damp pitch, surveying the low blanket of dank cloud and sniffing the humidity before turning to his opposite number and saying: "No thank you very much, we'll have a knock." Think about putting them in, as the old-timers used to say, but then bat anyway.

If West Indies — who, with their tremendous firepower fielded first regardless of the conditions simply to assert themselves — are taken out of the equation, the success rate from putting the opposition in is not good. Twice already in this series, the captains appear to have got it wrong.

At Edgbaston, Hansie Cronje called correctly, asked England to bat and saw them score 462, a potentially match-winning total. Then at Lord's, Stewart decided to put South Africa in and this time it was they who turned things on their head, making 360. England did well not to lose by an innings.

Yet how wrong was either of them on the evidence as presented. In his definitive book "The Art of Cricket" to be republished next month — Sir Donald Bradman suggests that the end result does not necessarily mean a wrong decision was made in the first instance.

"History," he says, "mostly records its verdict according to the result of an action and not according to whether it was correct by all known factors at the time. He might also have mentioned that, perversely, a captain is less likely to get pilloried if he bats first and is bowled out cheaply than if he fields first and gets caught."

So what of the series so far? At Birmingham, the two sides have disagreed with Cronje's decision to field first. Had England won the toss, they would have followed suit. In the event the ball lagged around alarmingly, the South African bowlers performed ably and England rode their luck. The captain cannot legislate



To bowl or not to bowl... both captains look confident at Lord's last week before Alec Stewart, left, asked Hansie Cronje to bat

CLIVE MASON

for that when he tosses the coin and the chances are that, had England bowled first, they would have dismissed South Africa cheaply.

Lord's may not have been quite so clear-cut. Certainly the groundsman's preparations had been hampered by the weather and as a result the pitch was always going to start damp, aiding the seam bowlers. Against that, though, was the prospect of some good weather which, if it dried out the surface and the indentations left by the ball, could make batting difficult in the fourth innings.

As the match neither reached the fifth day nor made much progress into the final innings, one can only hypothesise.

But Cronje has said that he would have batted first, although even that has to be taken with a pinch of salt such is the ideology that goes on to gain psychological points. Keith Fletcher, for instance, was a master at making the opposing captain feel he had blundered even before a ball was bowled.

It is undeniable, though, that South Africa were 46 for four after 18 overs and would have been 58 for five had Mike Atherton held a sharp chance at third slip offered by Jonty Rhodes when he had 10.

Had that catch been taken, South Africa might very well not have made 100 such was the dominance of the bowling.

Rather than Stewart's decision to field first, it was that miss and Cork's no-ball two overs later from which Rhodes was caught at slip — by Atherton again — that were the decisive moments of the game. Just as with England after they had been denied a win by the weather, the South Africans now have the high ground. But they remain one-all in duft performances.

For the next Test the selectors must do some hard thinking. Nine Tests have now passed since Darren Gough

last bowled for England and he is sorely missed. The hope has to be that his broken finger will have mended in time for Manchester, where presumably he would replace Dean Headley.

Angus Fraser, however, has taken only 12 wickets since his triumph in Trinidad and, although he exerts pressure, he has not looked like running through the opposition even in helpful conditions. The role of Mark Ealham is also under threat and Ben Hollis, if he is playing anything like his best, must be given his head.

In the absence of Mark Butcher the choice of Steve

James as Atherton's opening partner was a dumb one, with the selectors making the error of having mended in time for Manchester, where presumably he would replace Dean Headley.

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Rugby League

Gateshead in the mood for a life of Reilly

Andy Wilson

MALCOLM REILLY is poised to swap Newcastle, New South Wales for Newcastle, Tyne and Wear if Gateshead's application for a 1999 Super League franchise is accepted. Shane Richardson, the Australian leading the North-East executives of the 12 Super League clubs yesterday, said that he already had a coach and a number of top-class Australian players signed up. Richardson was unwilling to give details until a decision has been made on the Gateshead bid, but it is understood that talks with Reilly are at an advanced stage.

The former Great Britain coach will leave Australia at the end of the season after guiding the Knights to their first Premiership last September. Richardson returns home today, and is expected to conclude a deal with Reilly within two weeks — so long as Gateshead are awarded a franchise. A decision is due on August 17 but Richardson has urged the clubs to give him the go-ahead sooner.

Halifax hope that Kelvin Skerrett will sign up for the remainder of the season despite reports of interest from Bradford. The 34-year-old prop has been playing on short-term deals since joining Halifax last year, and the current agreement expires on July 5.

Bradford are desperate for forward cover after a string of serious injuries, but the Bulls coach Matthew Elliott denied knowledge of any move. Skerrett, who was appointed as the Wales captain last week, faces a disciplinary hearing on Thursday following his dismissal at Leeds last Friday night, and a ban of four matches or more would rule him out of the international against Emerging Nations on July 25.

Wigan have agreed a two-year contract with the 1994 Kangaroo tourist Greg Ikin, raising the question of which of their five overseas players will be released to clear space on their quota. The contracts of Henry Paul, Robbie McCormack and Mark Bell all expire at the end of this season, and Paul is tipped to return to his native Auckland.

Sport in brief

Boxing

Jane Couch yesterday became the first woman to be granted a professional fighter's licence by the British Board of Control. The move signals a new era in Britain, with Couch already attracting interest from several promoters. It is a three-year fight for recognition which led the 27-year-old welterweight world champion to take the board to a tribunal for sexual discrimination after her original application was rejected.

Motor Rallies

Colin McRae won the China Rally by some two minutes despite constant mechanical problems with his Subaru, writes David Williams. Overheating threatened to send the Scot and he finished with damaged wiring ligaments because of faulty steering.

Ice Hockey

Superleague has appointed the Great Britain coach Peter Woods as its director of sport, writes Vic Batchelder. The former Basingstoke Bison coach succeeds Richard Soprey who resigned in April to join the new London club. Woods will continue as the national coach.

Sailing

Peter Chittibuck's Spirit of England was first to finish the fourth leg of the Round Britain and Ireland Race, reaching Lowestoft after the 470 miles from Lerwick at 6.17am yesterday, writes Bob Fisher. Minto Performance Partners came in 1hr 10min later and the 40-foot trimaran FPC Greenway was third. The 306-mile final leg to Plymouth starts tomorrow.

Cycling

Chris Boardman won the fifth stage of the Tour of Catalonia in Girona, Spain, to retain the leader's yellow jersey.

Racing

Lingfield jumps plan under fire

Chris Hawkins

THEY race on the Flat at Lingfield Park this afternoon but the days of jumping and all-weather racing at the track are apparently numbered.

Plans by Arena Leisure, owners of Lingfield, to transfer jumping fixtures to Folkestone and all-weather racing to a new course at Thurrock have predictably proved controversial.

It is down to the British Horseracing Board to sanction the proposals and the future allocation of the track will meet on July 14 to discuss the switching of eight jump meetings to Folkestone making a total of 17 at the Kent course in the winter of 1999.

Lingfield, despite its susceptibility to all-weather racing, is popular with the jumping fraternity who fear their livelihood is gradually being eroded — Nottingham has already closed its jump course and Windsor wants to follow suit.

They have real worries for the strength of all-weather racing and the value of its day-to-day prizemoney, which often exceeds that on offer at jump meetings. It is a serious threat and the BHB already has applications for seven new racecourses incorporating all-weather tracks.

Clearly few, if any, of these applications have much chance of success because of financial limitations but the

BHB must not make that the sole criterion. Racing's administrators must make a conscious stand to protect jumping which is a vital part of our sporting heritage.

If the application of Arena Leisure for a new all-weather course at Thurrock were to be given the go-ahead, Lingfield would be developed as a training centre for 300 horses. No racing would take place there except on the Flat in the summer.

"We're looking to make Lingfield a training centre and high-quality turf track," says the chairman, John Stables. "We're looking to make Lingfield a training centre and high-quality turf track," says the chairman, John Stables. "We're looking to make Lingfield a training centre and high-quality turf track," says the chairman, John Stables.

"Folkestone is our other track and we are prepared to spend a lot of money redevel-

oping it for jumping," he said. "The ground there is much better for jumping than Lingfield where two seasons ago we lost three of our eight fixtures because of waterlogging."

Walter Swinburn is to step in for the ride on Aidan O'Brien's Saratoga Springs in Sunday's Irish Derby. Mick Kinane, who would have ridden the horse, misses the race following a four-day ban imposed on him by the Royal Ascot stewards last Friday.

Maridpour and Arctic Owl head betting for Northumberland Plate

ADDBROKES have topped their ante-post book on Saturday's Northumberland Plate at Newcastle and make Maridpour and Arctic Owl 7-2 joint favourites, followed by Mithak at 8-1 and Mawared and Rainbow Frontier at 10-1, writes Chris Hawkins.

Arctic Owl, trained by James Fanshawe, beat subsequent winner Top Cees by 14 lengths at York recently (incurring only a 3lb penalty) while Maridpour was a short-head winner of the Queen's Vase at Royal Ascot.

The Showcase Race initiative introduced at the beginning of the Flat season

to boost off-course betting turnover seems to be working and figures released by the bookmakers' trade organisation BOLA indicate an overall rise of eight per cent on 1997 figures.

"We are delighted that the initiative is producing results," said Paul Greeves, the BHB's director of racing. "Its prime target is to boost quiet weekdays which in the past lacked a feature race."

"The £10,000 handicaps transmitted on SIS but not on terrestrial television have produced an average increase of 11 per cent. Taken as a whole the figure is eight per cent."

Beverley card

CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
2.15	Thames Green Leaves
2.40	Thames Green Leaves
3.15	Thames Green Leaves
3.45	Thames Green Leaves
4.15	Thames Green Leaves
4.45	Thames Green Leaves
5.15	Thames Green Leaves

Right-handed track of 1m2 with 260 turn at T2, testing 5/16 mile which rises throughout. Good, Good to Firm in places. Denotes blinkers. Denotes blinkers. Denotes blinkers.

2.15	POLYTON MAIDEN AUCTION STAKES 2YO (DIV 1)	1m 2f 10yds £2,888 (10 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

2.45	REGIONAL UNIVERSITY CLAIMING STAKES	1m 2f £2,233 (5 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

3.15	113TH YEAR OF THE WATT MEMORIAL HANDICAP	1m 2f £3,326 (14 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

3.45	UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLNSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE HANDICAP	1m 2f £2,555 (10 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

4.15	PHORY PARK MAIDEN AUCTION STAKES 3YO	1m 10yds £2,465 (7 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

4.45	HILL BUSINESS SCHOOL APPRENTICES' MAIDEN HANDICAP	1m 2f £2,216 (14 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

5.15	POLYTON MAIDEN AUCTION STAKES 2YO (DIV 2)	1m 10yds £2,938 (10 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

5.45	POLYTON MAIDEN AUCTION STAKES 2YO (DIV 2)	1m 10yds £2,938 (10 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

Lingfield Jackpot meeting with form guide

CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
2.00	Thames Green Leaves
2.30	Thames Green Leaves
3.00	Thames Green Leaves
3.30	Thames Green Leaves
4.00	Thames Green Leaves
4.30	Thames Green Leaves
5.00	Thames Green Leaves

Turf course straight 714yds course with left-hand loop of about 1/2m attached, providing 41 turn at Sheep bank with downhill exit into straight. All-weather course, Equus 1000m course laid out inside turf track and only 1/2m from it. No straight part. Denotes blinkers. Denotes blinkers.

2.00	GOLDEN APPRENTICES' HANDICAP	1m 2f 125 (13 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

2.30	HENRY STREET MAIDEN FILLES' STAKES 3YO	1m 2f 125 (13 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

3.00	TATTERSALLS MAIDEN AUCTION STAKES 2YO	1m 2f 125 (13 declared)
1.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
1.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
2.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
3.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
4.45	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1
5.15	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1	Arctic Owl (10) 10/1

200 (r)	1-15	Parasolman Pursuit (11) - Dns A-11																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																				
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The Guardian Tuesday June 23 1998

France 98

Have you heard the one about the American, the Iranian and the Scotsman? In Lyon the answer is a McDonald's



Jim White
ON SUNDAY Lyon airport was awash with news cameras even arriving for the evening's big game between Iran and the United States, the encounter which would leave no hostage to fortune. But the American fan in from London was not to be distracted. Showing a grasp of footballing cliché which can only bode well for the game's establishment in his homeland, he said: "I'm

not interested in the politics. I'm only interested in the three points."
In which case he was the only person in Lyon who wasn't aware of the wider significance of this game. The town was heaving with visitors anxious to make a political point. And the point they seemed most interested in making was this: we can be more ostentatiously friendly and forgiving than you. Never mind 20 years of anger and rhetoric, everywhere you looked there were Iranians and Americans swapping handshakes, flags and fraternal greetings. Also there were kitted Scotsmen, en route to nearby St Etienne and keen, through their cheery high jinks, to convey that message

vital to their national well-being — they are not English. It has become a common place of this World Cup that every time you encounter a municipal fountain, there will be a Scotsman in it. In Lyon, the modernist watery flume in the main square was occupied for much of the afternoon by a re-run of the Scotland-Iran clash of 1978. Or would have been if the dozen Scotsmen kicking a ball around in the water had succeeded in their urgent mission to persuade any Iranians to join in.

In truth, things may have been more tense in the town had the rival sets of supporters been more representative of their countries, but as it was the American contingent seemed to be made up entirely of college fraternity outings. Well-pressed, well-beeled, cosmopolitan, sophisticated, there wasn't a red neck among them.

And the Iranians were clearly not revolutionary guards. Unless the mullahs had given special dispensation for their lads to walk through Lyon cradling cans of Fosters. These were Iranians flying in from around the globe, from London, Paris, Berlin. One or two had even made it from Tehran.

"Please," said one, "if you are writing an article make it clear we are here to support Iran the country, not the Iranian government. We all hate the government." Curiously, he was not anxious to give his name.

It has been reported that the mullahs in Iran have established a 20-second delay on coverage of France 98, to give them time to apply the censor's scissors. Perhaps they are worried about the damage that might be caused to their people by catching sight of inappropriately dressed women in the crowd, such as that curvaceous pair you see at every match involving Brazil.

Fortunately for the collective blood pressure in Tehran, the massed cameras around town didn't bother to record the female Iranian fans making their way to this game doing provocative things like wearing shorts, miniskirts and broad smiles in public. Some were even walking alongside their menfolk, instead of five paces behind.

Football: it is the top of a very slippery slope.
Such was the overwhelming atmosphere of tolerance, no reference was made anywhere to former hostilities. Even the T-shirt sellers had confined themselves to messages of goodwill. Items bearing the words "Death to the Great Satan" had presumably been packed away for next season to be sold outside Premiership grounds during the visit of Manchester United.

Group A: Scotland's moment of truth

Why the art and graft of Dailly are growing by the week

Patrick Glenn on the defender who believes it will be 13th time lucky

KIRSTY DAILLY was one of the first on the hot line when the French organising committee released extra tickets for the World Cup. Despite giving her address in England she secured them for the matches against Norway and Morocco.

Optimism is so pronounced in Kirsty's family, however, that she confidently ordered tickets for the second-round match. That boldness should be a source of encouragement for Scots everywhere. Her husband will be one of the players striving to overcome Morocco in St Etienne tonight to take Scotland into an historic second-phase meeting, probably with Italy, in Marseille on Saturday.

The ins and outs

BRAZIL are through as group winners and Norway must win to be sure of joining them. A win for Scotland or Morocco will put them through if Norway fail to defeat Brazil. If Scotland and Morocco draw, Morocco are definitely out, but Scotland can still speak through on goal difference.

Christian Dailly, the 24-year-old Derby County defender, will make his 13th international appearance in the final Group A match at the Stade Geoffroy Guichard, where even a drop could take the Scots through.



Fine tuning... Dailly tests his attacking skills on Colombia during last month's warm-up in the United States

very hard and we all came back feeling very good about ourselves, very fit and ready. "Craig has kept us like that and anybody would see in the draw with Norway that we were much stronger in the later stages. They were going down with cramp while we were still running, still chasing the winning goal."

Dailly's first experience of international football was not so much a fleeting visit as a long-term tenancy. As the holder of 34 under-21 caps, he lived to be a world record, gained over almost six years from the age of 16, he has long been in love with the idea of playing for his country.

That made me want to go elsewhere. When I got to England and made the Derby side I began to realise that I could get to full international level. I learned a lot about looking after myself physically and mentally and the consistency in my game went up. But I have to admit that making the World Cup this quick has come as a bit of a surprise.

Dailly's versatility has spilled into his international career, having already played in central defence and in both wing-back positions. At Derby, we have a manager, Jason Laursen, who actually tells you before the game: "Don't give me the ball. He likes to focus fully on his direct opponent."

Now McKinlay is counted out

Patrick Glenn in St Etienne

BILLY MCKINLAY became the second Scotland player to be sent home from the World Cup because of injury yesterday, abdominal damage forcing him to join Colin Calderwood on the sidelines.
The Blackburn midfielder will consult a specialist today to decide whether or not surgery is required. If it is not he will probably return to the Scots squad, provided they qualify for the second round after their final group match against Morocco here tonight.

McKinlay, however, will take no further part in the competition. The damage to the upper groin is on the opposite side from that on which he required an operation six months ago.
"It's a rotten thing for the player and a setback for us," said the Scotland manager Craig Brown. "When we remember the midfield marking job that Billy did on Zidane Zidane against France in a friendly last November, we realise how we might have done with his capabilities."

Brazil looking to wider horizons

Michael Walker in Lyon

CONSIDERING Brazil are supposed to be the big noise at this World Cup, their camp has been remarkably quiet so far. There have been the Denilson debates, the Bebeto debates, of course, but these are details about selection, of more concern internally than internationally.

Part of the problem is that it is difficult for the neutral to get as excited about Brazil easing past Scotland or Morocco as it is Nigeria beating Spain or Chile outplaying Italy.

Thus the excitement has been elsewhere. In France 98, although tonight in Marseille, when Brazil meet Norway in Group A, it might be the moment that the holders decide to become a little more expansive.

There is an edge to this encounter following Norway's 4-2 victory over Mario Zagallo's team in Oslo a year ago. But just now sharp it is will not be revealed until kick-off and trying to find clues as to Brazil's approach to the match is not easy.

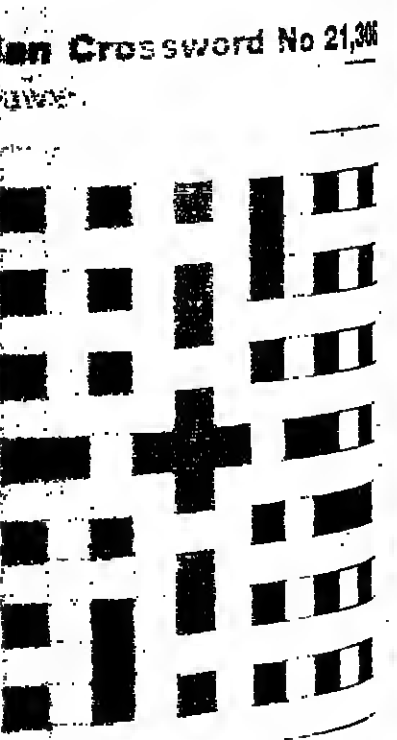
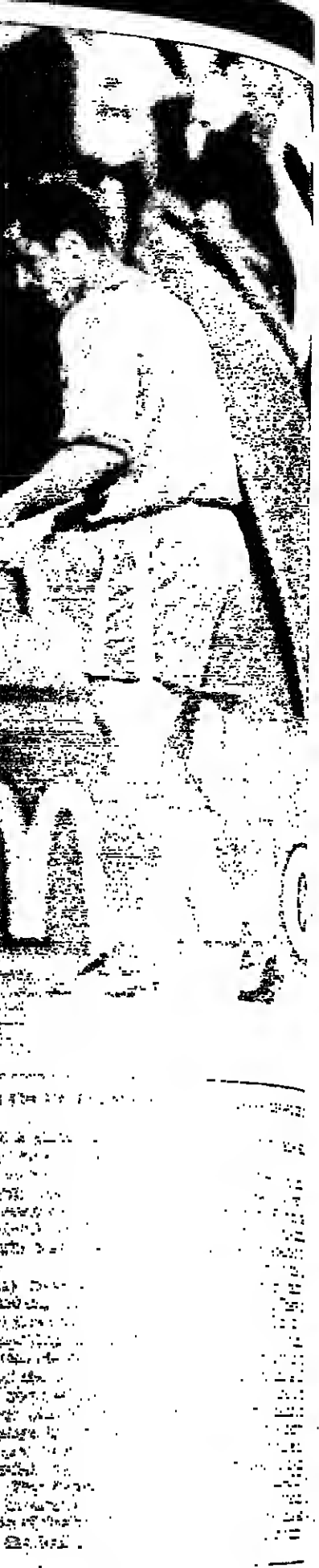
Rivaldo, for example, appears more concerned about who Brazil will meet in the last 16. "A possible Brazil-Italy match would be an early final," said the Barcelona midfielder, "which would be unfortunate for both teams."

That does not suggest that Norway are the forefront of the players' minds. Leonardo, on the other hand, said: "I can assure you that Brazil is gaining power. The team is not yet at 100 per cent but we have proved our precision and concentration and, if Brazil want to take home a fifth title, we need to beat everyone."

World Cup			
Scotland - 0891 77 88 90			
0930 16 86 +			
England 97			
General 99			
Arsenal	60	Fulham	57
Aston Villa	61	Huddersfield	74
Barnsley	62	Leeds United	75
Birmingham	63	Sheff Wed	76
Blackburn	64	Sheff Wed	77
Blackpool	65	Southampton	78
Bolton	66	Spurs	79
Bristol City	67	Stoke City	80
Bristol Rovers	68	Sunderland	81
Burnley	69	Walsley	82
Cardiff	70	West Ham	83
Charlton	71	Wimbledon	84
Coventry City	72	Wolves	85
Crystal Palace	73	QPR	86
Derby County	74		
Doncaster	75		

The Guardian INTERACTIVE

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Down

1 Across

2 Across

3 Across

4 Across

5 Across

6 Across

7 Across

8 Across

9 Across

10 Across

11 Across

12 Across

13 Across

14 Across

15 Across

16 Across

17 Across

18 Across

19 Across

20 Across

21 Across

Road to the final



C	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	2	2	0	0	0	0	6
Denmark	2	1	1	0	0	1	4
Spain	2	0	1	1	1	1	3
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
West June 19 - Riyadh							
Saudi Arabia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Denmark	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1
Japan 88	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 38,140							
East June 19 - Doha							
France	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	3
Dogny 30, Issa (opt) 78, Hany 90	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
South Africa	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 55,077							
West June 20 - Riyadh							
South Africa	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1
McCarthy 82	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Bosman 81	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Malon 13	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1
Attendance: 38,500							
East June 20 - Doha							
France	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	4
Hany 27, Tounsi 68, Liberman 85	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Saudi Arabia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 75,000							
West June 21 - Doha							
France	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Denmark	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Kos, Jansen, Bosman (opt)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
South Africa	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Saudi Arabia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

D	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigeria	2	0	0	0	4	2	6
Paraguay	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Spain	2	0	1	1	1	1	3
Bulgaria	2	0	1	0	1	1	3
West June 22 - Nouakchott							
Paraguay	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Bulgaria	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 27,650							
East June 22 - Nouakchott							
Spain	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	2
Hiero 21, Real 47	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Nigeria	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	3
Adjeja 24, Lem 73, Osh 79	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 38,557							
East June 23 - Paris							
Nigeria	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1
Ipeba 27	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Bulgaria	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 44,500							
East June 23 - St. Pierre							
Spain	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Paraguay	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 35,300							
West June 24 - Nouakchott							
Spain	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Bulgaria	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Kos, Jansen 74, Tounsi (opt)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Nigeria	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Paraguay	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

E	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
Mexico	2	1	0	0	1	0	3
Belgium	2	0	0	0	2	2	2
S. Korea	2	0	0	2	1	0	0
East June 25 - Lyon							
South Korea	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1
Van Soest 28	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mexico	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	2
Palenz 51, Hernandez 75, 84	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 37,558							
West June 25 - St. Pierre							
Holland	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Belgium	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 75,000							
East June 26 - St. Pierre (day)							
Belgium	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	2
Winters 43, 48	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mexico	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	2
Camus 49p 56 (pen), Blanco 83	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 34,500							
East June 26 - Marseille (night)							
Holland	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	5
Coiz 37, Overmars 41, Bunkamp 71, Van Nieuwen 79, R De Boer 83	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
South Korea	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 60,000							
West June 26 - St. Pierre (night)							
Holland	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mexico	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Kos, Jansen 24, Palenz (opt)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Belgium	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
South Korea	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

F	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	2	1	0	1	2	4	4
Yugoslavia	2	1	1	0	3	4	4
Italy	2	0	2	1	2	3	3
US	2	0	0	2	1	0	0
East June 28 - St. Pierre							
Yugoslavia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Italy 73	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Iran	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 30,082							
West June 28 - St. Pierre							
Germany	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	2
Walter 4, Nouvonen 85	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
United States	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 43,475							
East June 29 - St. Pierre (night)							
Germany	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	2
Farnet 73, Blerfat 80	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Yugoslavia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Markovic 15, Blerfat 54	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 43,776							
West June 29 - Lyon (night)							
United States	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Iran 67	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Iran	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	2
Ali 65, Mahdavi 84	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 44,000							
East June 30 - St. Pierre (night)							
Germany	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Iran	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 30,000							
West June 30 - Lyon (day)							
United States	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

G	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	1	1	0	0	2	3	3
Romania	1	1	0	0	1	3	3
Colombia	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Tunisia	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
East June 19 - Marseille							
England	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	2
Shaw 42, Scholes 90	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tunisia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 54,587							
West June 19 - St. Pierre							
Romania	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1
Pic 45	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Colombia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 37,572							
East June 20 - St. Pierre (night)							
Colombia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1
Pineda 63	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tunisia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 35,000							
West June 20 - St. Pierre (night)							
Romania	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
England	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 30,022							
East June 21 - St. Pierre (night)							
Romania	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tunisia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 30,022							
West June 21 - Lyon (night)							
Germany	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 44,000							
East June 22 - St. Pierre (night)							
Germany	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 44,000							

H	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	2	2	0	0	0	0	6
Croatia	2	0	0	1	1	0	2
Japan	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Jamaica	2	0	0	2	1	0	0
East June 19 - Toulouse							
Argentina	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1
Borrich 28	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Japan	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 33,400							
West June 19 - St. Pierre							
Japan	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1
Edu 45	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Croatia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	3
Stanic 27, Pruchnicki 53, Suker 88	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 38,022							
East June 20 - St. Pierre (night)							
Japan	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Croatia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1
Suker 77	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 30,000							
West June 20 - Paris (day)							
Argentina	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	5
Ortega 22, 55 (hat-trick) 74, 78, 83 (pen)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Jamaica	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0
Attendance: 44,500							
East June 21 - St. Pierre (night)							
Argentina	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Croatia	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 44,500							
West June 21 - Lyon (night)							
Japan	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attendance: 44,500							

France 98



Leider of the pack... Colombia's Preciado takes wing with Carlos Valderrama after hitting the winner against Tunisia

Group G: Colombia 1 Tunisia 0

Colombia have trouble tuning in

Aerial power is proving a problem for the South Americans, says Paddy Agnew

ENGLAND should rest easy. Colombia had promised a performance that would highlight their new-found unity and in many ways did that here yesterday. However the overall impression was that, for all their obvious skill and technique, they are eminently beatable.

Their victory at the Stade de la Mosson was thanks to an 84th-minute goal from leader Preciado, who had come on as a substitute in the 57th minute.

When England meet Colombia in Lens, Glenn Hoddle and his men will relish taking on their defence in the air. Against Tunisia, a side not renowned for their aerial power, the South Americans appeared almost as uncomfortable with crosses and corner kicks as had the North Africans when they lost 2-0 to England in Marseille.

It was the 36-year-old Colombian captain Carlos Valderrama who had the decisive say by making the most of a Tunisian mistake.

He seized a loose ball before directing it brilliantly into the path of Preciado. The 25-year-old from the Santa Fe Bogota club did well to ride two tackles before getting in a shot which the Tunisian keeper Chokri El Ouer could only touch into his own net.

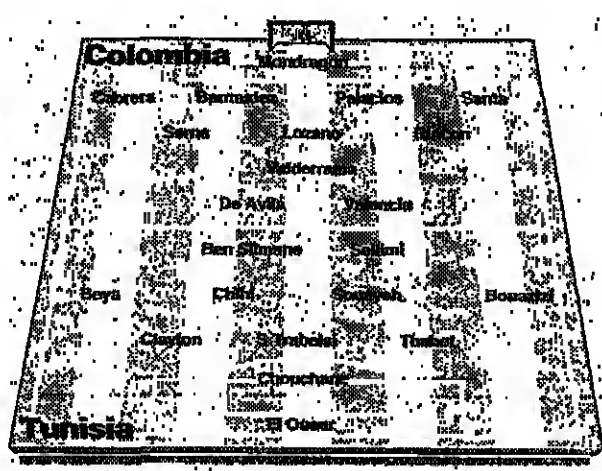
"I am very happy to repay the confidence that the coach showed in me when he brought me on," Preciado said. With the England game in mind he added: "It was very important. We will have to work very hard this week to bring satisfaction to the Colombian people."

Until then, it had been a desperately close affair and one in which the Tunisians, too, had lived up to their pre-match promise to show that they were a better side than the one which offered such meek resistance to England.

Colombia made two changes from the side who lost 1-0 to Romania in their opening game. After that defeat the controversial striker Faustino Asprilla had mouthed off rather too much to a journalist from one of Colombia's innumerable radio stations and in the process talked himself on to an early flight home.

Yesterday, Asprilla was replaced by Adolfo Valencia while the man who had started beside him against Romania, Victor Aristizabal, was replaced by Antony De Avila.

Tunisia's Polish coach, Henryk Kasperczak, made three changes, partly injury and partly tactical, in failing to claim a Tunisian goal. He knocked the ball on to the back of Bouazizi.



Match stats	Col	Tun
Possession	51%	49%
Attempts on target	7	8
Attempts off target	6	13
Goals	1	0
Fouls	17	20
Offsides	2	4
Bookings	1	2

from which it rebounded against the crossbar.

Colombia could perhaps have argued that they had done more to be in front at this stage since El Ouer had been the busier of the two goalkeepers until then. Twice he made well-timed runs off his line to deprive De Avila when the little Colombian had been sent clean through.

However El Ouer showed again that for all his obvious goalmouth agility, he too was vulnerable in the air when he missed a De Avila cross. Fortunately for him the Colombian defender Everth Palacios missed his header with the empty goal at his mercy.

However Palacios's blunders were spared by Preciado and his winning effort will have provided a great boost to Colombian morale as they prepare for Lens with all still to play for.

Afterwards Colombia's coach Hernan Dario Gomez admitted some of his side's play was "mediocre". Theo, alluding to the England game, he said: "We feel very confident it will be just like today. We had to win today. We'll have to win on Friday too."

Just before the interval Mondragon again looked less than secure in the air when failing to claim a Tunisian goal. He knocked the ball on to the back of Bouazizi.

Stoichkov in hot water after going missing

by Ian Mallin

THE Bulgarian strikers Christo Stoichkov and Lyuboslav Penev will be fined after they stayed out all night without permission.

They turned up at their hotel on the outskirts of Paris yesterday afternoon and trained with the squad but the Bulgarian spokesman Nikola Banev said: "There's going to be a severe fine."

The players earlier claimed they had overslept in their hotel rooms and had not been woken. The incident follows the sending home of two South African players, Naughty Mokoena and Brendan Augustine after they stayed out until dawn on Sunday.

It has been a troubled tournament for the Bulgarians, who reached the semi-finals at the 1994 World Cup. They have been unimpressive in their first two Group D matches, drawing 0-0 with Paraguay and losing 1-0 to Nigeria. But they can still qualify for the second round if they beat Spain tomorrow and Nigeria defeat or draw with Paraguay.

Yugoslavia, cursing their luck after letting two points slip in their Group F 2-2 draw against Germany on Sunday, have injury problems before Thursday's game against the United States.

The Valencia central defender Miroslav Djukic has ruptured his calf muscle and is unlikely to take any more part in the campaign. The left-back Zoran Mirkovic suffered an ankle injury in Yugoslavia's opening 1-0 win against Iran and has not recovered.

Darko Kovacevic, who led

the Yugoslav attack in the match against Germany, suffered a hamstring injury early in the second half and will probably miss the game against the United States.

The key midfielder Dejan Savicevic, who has missed both Yugoslav matches, still refuses to play because of his knee ligament injury. Coaches have claimed that he is fit but has a "psychological" problem of facing more injuries.

The defenders Sinisa Mihailovic and Nisa Savelljic are also having treatment.

The official World Cup website has scored with Internet users. Some 450 million hits have been made since the tournament began on June 10. Ten million people from 170 countries have visited the site, which carries results, news and quotes from leading players and coaches.

Naughty boys take their leave as South Africa blow lid off curfews

by Brendan Augustine

BRENDAN AUGUSTINE, expelled from South Africa's World Cup squad after Naughty Mokoena, apologised yesterday for letting down his teammates. The pair were sent home after breaking a curfew and made an emotional departure from the team's headquarters at Vichy.

At the same time officials disclosed there had been two previous incidents in France where players broke curfews set by the coach Philippe Troussier. A group of 15 was involved in the first incident and five in the second, two days later. All face fines.

In a statement Augustine said: "Although there were a number of factors that led to me breaking my curfew, my behaviour was unprofessional and unnecessary." Augustine was understood to have been unhappy with his substitution at half-time in the 1-1 draw with Denmark in Toulouse last Thursday.

His team-mate John Mokoena, South Africa's most senior player, criticised the decision to send them home.

Nigeria's coach Bora Milutinovic, preparing his Group D winners for tomorrow's match with Paraguay in Toulouse, said yesterday the Super Eagles could win the World Cup.

Naughty Mokoena and Brendan Augustine after they stayed out until dawn on Sunday.

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Darko Kovacevic, who led

Spain's Amor falls in love with Fiorentina as Earle says Boyz have grown up fast

by Ian Mallin

THE Spain midfielder Guillermo Amor is on the verge of finalising a deal with Fiorentina, ending a 19-year association with Barcelona.

Officials of the Italian side met the midfielder's representatives last weekend in Paris and drew up a two-year deal which will reportedly earn the 30-year-old \$4 million (\$2.4 million).

Barcelona's Dutch coach Louis Van Gaal cursed controversy last month when he told Amor he had no future with the Catalan club.

Amor, one of the most popular players in Spain, joined Barcelona as an 11-year-old. He went on to win several league titles and a European Cup under Johan Cruyff.


Wimbledon's Robbie Earle yesterday attempted to put a brave face on Jamaica's early exit from France 98 after their 5-0 drubbing by Argentina.

Rene Simoes's side can no longer qualify for the second round, having lost their first match in a final 3-1 to Croatia. But Earle, who came on as a 73rd-minute substitute on Sunday evening, insisted that the World Cup would hold

happy memories for the Jamaicans.

"It will remain a rich experience," he said. "If we haven't learnt anything from our two matches, it's because we're stubborn. But we've realised that to qualify was only one stage. To succeed in the finals is much harder."

None the less Simoes does not believe he will become the third coach to lose his job at these finals after South Korea's Cha Bum-Kun and fellow Brazilian Carlos Alberto Parreira, who was in charge of Saudi Arabia.



All the scores

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Timid Tim

Henman sets nerves jangling at Wimbledon

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The Guardian Sport

Tuesday June 23 1998 www.football.guardian.co.uk/worldcup

France 98



Rising to the challenge... England's captain Alan Shearer displays his air power as the Romania goalkeeper Bogdan Stelea and defender Ilan Filipescu struggle to get off the ground. PHOTOGRAPH: RUSSELL BOYCE

Group G: Romania 2 England 1

Petrescu shatters England

Last-gasp goal from Romania steals Owen's thunder

David Lacey in Toulouse on a result that sets up a showdown against Colombia

DAN PETRESCU brought England to their knees in the Stade Municipal last night with a last-minute goal after Michael Owen had appeared to have answered England's call with a dramatic equaliser to Viorel Moldovan's effort for Romania two minutes into the second half.

Petrescu, receiving a pass from the left, held off a clumsy challenge from his Chelsea team-mate Graeme Le Saux in the penalty area and fired a shot through goalkeeper David Seaman's legs. Owen entered the fray in place of Teddy Sheringham in the 73rd minute and was on the spot to force the ball home from close range with England staring defeat in the face after the opening strike by Moldovan, who happens to play for Coventry City.

For England, games against Romania have usually been uneasy affairs characterised by the difficulty English teams have always found in

getting to grips with opponents who do not give the ball away. Last night's match was always going to be a further test of how far, under Hoddle, England's style has moved towards a more patient, possessive way of doing things.

From a Romanian point of view, following Colombia's 1-0 victory earlier over Tunisia, a draw was the more acceptable result in terms of winning the group than it was for England. Romania would still be second on goal difference but have a relatively easier final group game against Tunisia compared to England's meeting with Colombia in Lens.

Not that there was much sign of passivity from either side last night. In fact, Hagi, immediately identified as Romania's puppet master, managed to earn a yellow card after only three minutes for bringing down Sol Campbell.

From the outset, then, this was a contest of movement and aggression. It made

sense: neither team could afford to play the sort of containing game with which England teased Tunisia during the opening 20 minutes in Marseille.

Adrian Ilie's speed and mobility, together with his habit of drifting into space late to pick up passes from Hagi, posed an underlying threat. The early corners were Romanian, but as soon as England spread their play and started to open up the right flank for

Darren Anderton they appeared the more likely to score.

In the sixth minute there was an echo of Euro 96 in the way that Anderton, set up by Gary Neville's overlapping run and passes from Teddy Sheringham and David Batty, cut in to skim the crossbar with a rising shot. A minute later Anderton gathered David Batty's return ball before producing a cross that found Alan Shearer's head

beating the hands of Bogdan Stelea and Gheorghe Popescu clearing from the goalmouth. Paul Scholes's half-touch of a shot.

This was a confident, composed England and on the quarter-hour an old Tottenham combination produced another English roar as a centre from Anderton led to Sheringham volleying the ball just wide. Hagi was seen as an avenue for openings, but Romania's attacks were gradually being stifled by the English cover, and their long balls, at that point, held little threat.

At this level, however, that can signal a moment of great danger, and, sure enough, Romania all but scored out of nothing in the 25th minute. Dorinel Munteanu's prodigious crossfield pass found Ilie unattended on the left. As he moved towards goal, David Seaman advanced to meet the menace whereupon Ilie lobbed the England goalkeeper; English hearts stopped as the ball sailed towards an empty net — and rebounded from the bar.

Around about that time Paul Ince pulled up in some discomfort, possibly with an ankle injury. The effect was

dramatic. Three minutes past the half-hour Ince gave way to David Beckham, whose absence from the side had been causing no little controversy.

Now, albeit through force of circumstance, England had a chance to find out if Anderton and Beckham could operate as a pair on the right when it mattered most. Certainly the immediate signs were encouraging with Beckham having the air of a man with a point to make.

But so did Hagi and two minutes into the second half he had made it to England's chagrin. An innocent Romanian throw on the right suddenly became fraught with danger as Hagi turned away from Le Saux with Campbell not sure what to do.

Before he could act, Hagi had lobbed the ball square over the head of Tony Adams, who turned too late to stop Moldovan striding past him to beat Seaman from close range. It was a sucker punch of a goal and one that had exploded a rare lapse in England's concentration.

Now Romania's attack, buoyed by this success, began to find angles of approach which made Hoddle's defence

look square and ponderous. Ilie thumped a 20 yard shot into Seaman's stomach and then sent Hagi past Gary Neville with an excellent pass which was let down by an uncharacteristically poor touch from the Romanian captain.

England's attack was starting to labour as the opposition Marked back at full space. Something of the earlier zest had gone from Hoddle's side. Then Beckham lifted English spirits with a free kick just over the bar. Soon after that over Shearer had nodded the ball down Anderton drove the ball across the goal mouth, Sheringham failing to reach it at the bar post.

With 17 minutes to go, not unexpectedly, Sheringham gave way to Michael Owen and within 10 minutes he produced an equaliser. Shearer gained possession to the right of goal and amid the confusion after he had driven the ball in low Owen forced it into the net. That moment almost seemed Owen's destiny.

SUBSTITUTIONS Romania: Single for Hagi, Zinicu, Marinovici for Sanga, 54, Larinca for Moldovan, 87, England: Beckham for Ince, 33, Owen for Sheringham, 73, 80, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 00, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 00, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 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